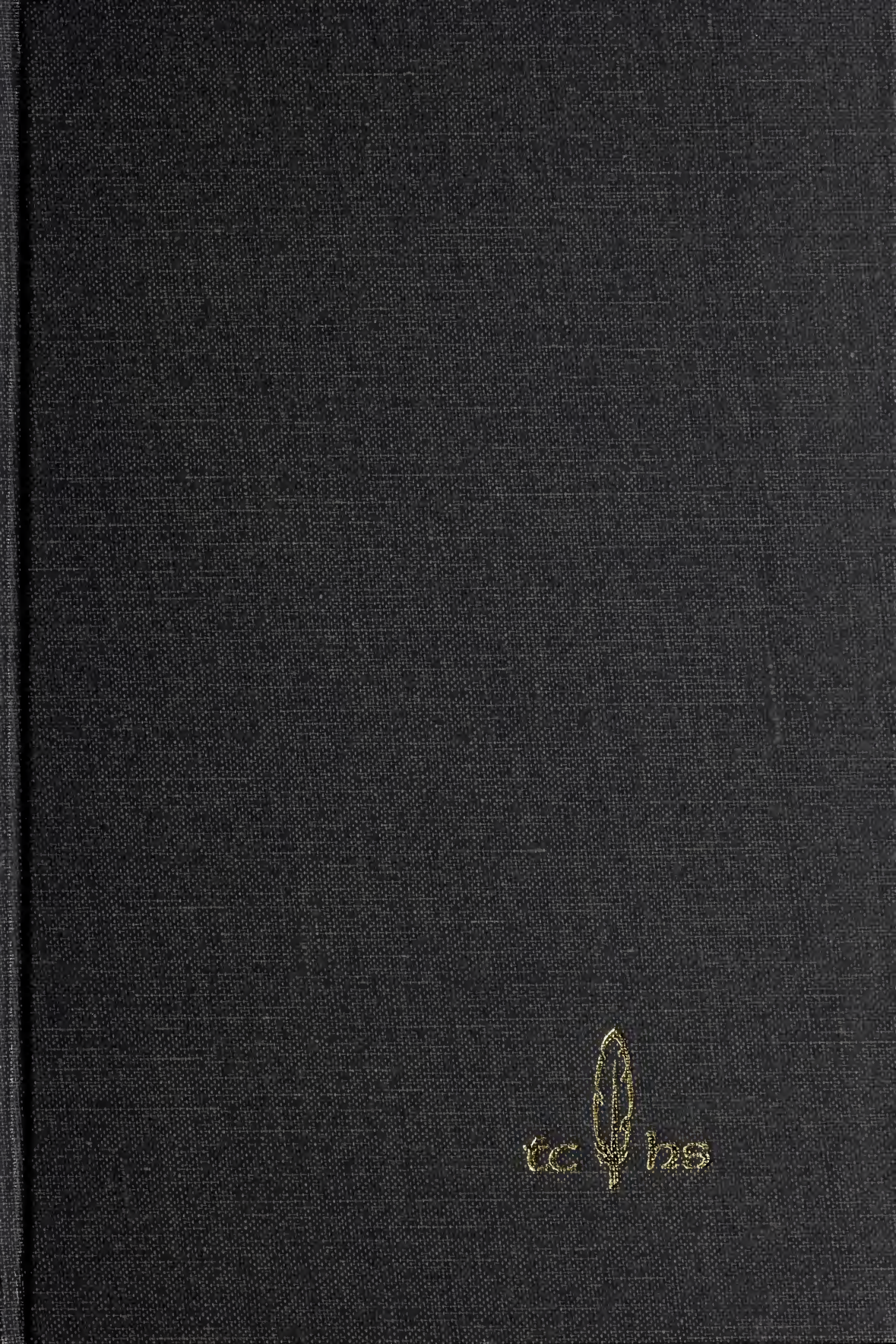
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TENNESSEE COUNTY HISTORY SERIES

Cannon County

by Robert L. Mason

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MEMPHIS STATE UNIVERSITY PRESS
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To Ruth, companion over county roads and byways—and sometimes no way at all.

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Robert L. Mason

September 15, 1981

Preface

I grew up in Cannon County and early had a love for its mountain, its intricate tangle of hills and hollows, and its gentle table land. I had some urge to write about them and the people, who like ourselves, wrested a subsistence from them. I did so, in a small way, in school papers, a master's thesis, and a Ph.D. dissertation. Graduate work, however, and teaching pushed such matters into the background, and it was 30 years before I could choose early retirement and return to the county with some vague notion of picking up where I had left off.

I am not a historian, and I had not seriously considered writing a history of the county. But the Spirit of '76 was in the air, so a county historical society was formed for the express purpose, among others, of producing a new county history, and the time seemed ripe. But research had to be done from start-go. So I began collecting data, recording them on index cards, and writing rough drafts of tentative chapters.

Then I received word about the Tennessee County History Series and agreed to write the volume for Cannon County. This meant carrying along two manuscripts at the same time, since requirements for the two were different, especially as to length and documentation. The purpose of this TCHS volume is to present a brief account for the reader who may be interested in

getting a general view of the county from its settlement to the present time. Though documentation is omitted, it can be furnished, and it will appear in the longer and more detailed Cannon County Historical Society edition.

CANNON County is situated midway of the eastern section of Middle Tennessee. It has an area of 271 square miles. Its growing season is nearly 200 days. Its average last killing frost in the spring is April 9, and the average first in the fall is October 22. It has an annual rainfall of 50 inches.

The county is bordered on the west by Rutherford County, on the north by Wilson and DeKalb counties, on the east by Warren County, and on the south by Coffee County. One-third of the county lies on the Highland Rim, and two-thirds lie on the ten-mile ribbon of hills and hollows and broader valleys bordering the eastern edge of the Central Basin. Short Mountain sits on both, rising to 2092 feet at its highest point, effectively pinning the two sections together.

To the east, the mountain looks down on the Highland Rim, a level plain lying 900 feet below and stretching fifteen to twenty miles to the Cumberland Plateau, of which it was once a part. Westward spreads a tangle of hills and hollows and ridges like motionless waves of a stormy sea.

The tops of the hills and ridges are on a general level with the surface of the Highland Rim, and once were a part of it, just as Short Mountain was once a part of the Cumberland Plateau. Below the ridges and hills, the myriad hollows, eroded

by ancient winds and waters, dip 300 to 400 feet or more to the branches, creeks, and Stone's River that drain them.

From the western end of Short Mountain a continuous narrow ridge runs roughly westward from Sugar Tree Knob at the mountain's base to Rucker's Knob on the Cannon-Rutherford County line. There, it turns abruptly north to disappear in southeastern Wilson County. The narrow ridge, often no more than a few feet wide, sharply divides the central and western parts of the county into north and south sections. North of the ridge, called Dividing Ridge, all hollows and valleys drain northward to Smith's Fork and from there into the Caney Fork River and on into the Cumberland at Carthage. South of the ridge, all streams flow into Stone's River, which originates in a narrow hollow near the foot of Short Mountain and flows westward through Rutherford County and into the Cumberland at Donelson, near Nashville.

On the Highland Rim, all streams flow eastward toward the Cumberland Mountains into Barren Fork and Collins Rivers, tributaries of the Caney Fork. All streams originate in the county, except for two or three short tributaries of Brawley's Fork and Barren Fork in the extreme southern part of the county which originate a short distance over the line in Coffee County and quickly flow into Cannon.

Short Mountain

Short Mountain is about five square miles in area. Some geographers and perhaps all purists are uncomfortable with the term *Short Mountain* in the singular, feeling it should be *Short Mountains* because of the two separate spurs. But no Cannon Countian calls it the Short Mountains, or ever has.

One spur of Short Mountain is higher than the other, rising to 2092 feet. The top of the spur is sandstone, which resists erosion and is responsible for the surface not having weathered away and exposing the softer limestone strata beneath. The top surface remains like that of the Cumberland Plateau. Just underneath the sandstone lies a bed of conglomerate rock made up of small, water-rounded pebbles embedded in cementlike sand. The rock strata from top to bottom resemble those of the

Rucker's Knob on western end of Dividing Ridge near Porterfield.

western Cumberland escarpment. This spur, the west spur, is known locally as Dick Taylor Mountain, for the Dick Taylor family who lived high on its northwest side for many years.

The other spur, the east spur, about a mile away, is lower, something over 1700 feet. It has been shorn of its protective layer of sandstone and has weathered down. It is known locally as Mason Mountain, sometimes Burger Mountain, for families who lived on the north and south sides of it in the 1800s.

The Highland Rim

The area of the Highland Rim section of the county is about 90 square miles. It is a gently undulating plateau tilting slightly to the east, with an elevation of a little over 1100 feet on the western edge to about 1000 feet at the Warren County line. The soils are of a kind called siliceous, derived from weathered chert, a hard, flinty rock that resists weathering when intact and is mainly responsible for the preservation of the level surface of the Rim. The soils are thin, whitish or light gray, flourlike to the touch, acid and infertile. J. B. Killebrew, in his *Resources of Tennessee,* had this to say of the Highland Rim in the 1870s:

> The "barren lands" are usually very level and thinly wooded, and present to the eye a beautiful surface. Many settlements have from time to time been made upon this character of soil, but are quickly abandoned, leaving sightless "broom sedge"

> fields and a few fruit trees as the only trace of their former occupancy. It would be unjust to those seeking homes in our state to conceal the fact that this character of the soil is unfit for general farming purposes, and whoever relies upon it for the growing of ordinary crops must remain steeped in poverty and destitution.

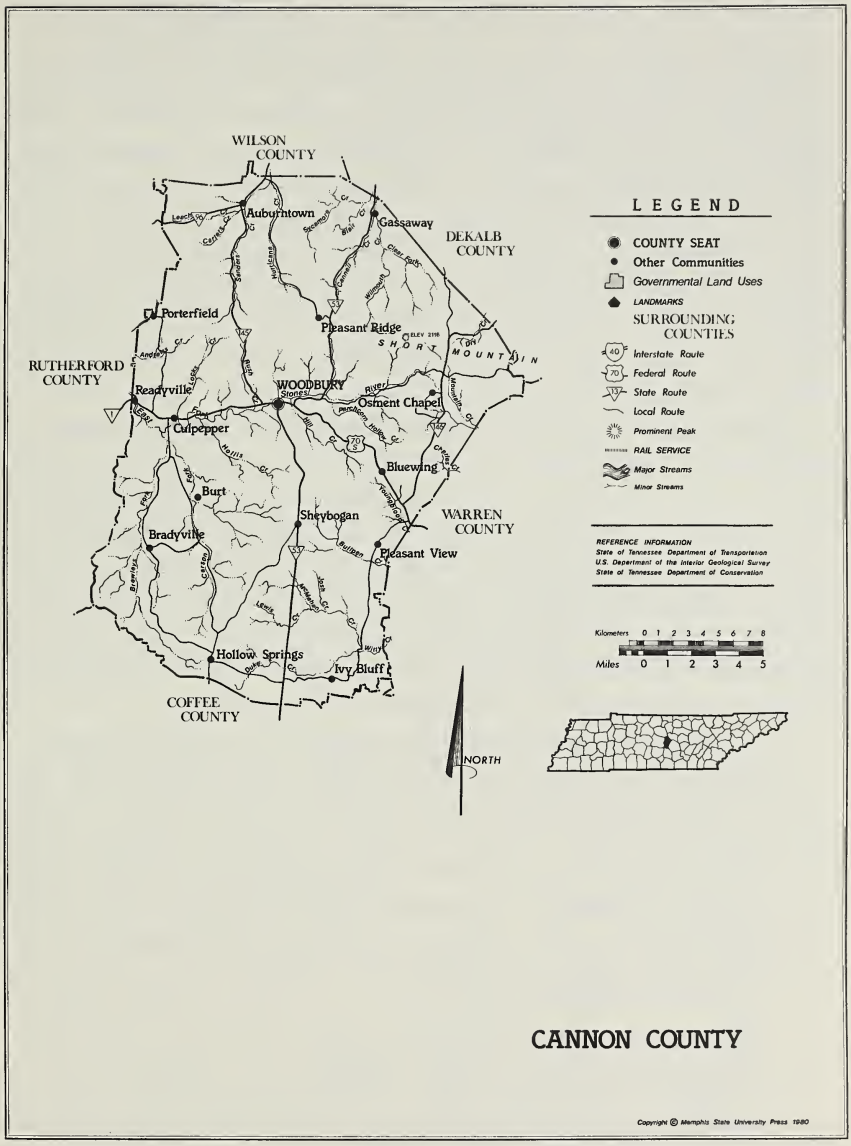
For the reasons Killebrew describes here, the region was long known as the "Barrens," (or Bar'ns, as it was locally pronounced). His view held pretty well true until well into the twentieth century. The area was not settled as fast or as thickly as other parts of the county. People in the hills, not wholly without derision, commonly referred to residents of the area as "Bar'nites," and people on the Highland Rim just as frequently retaliated with "Hillbillies."

Since 1930, however, a dramatic change has taken place in the Barrens. The coming of the county agents and the farmers' slow but steady acceptance of better farming methods, such as liming and fertilization, have made the soils of the Highland Rim as productive as any in the county. It has the further advantages, too, of being level, unencumbered with rocks, and easily cultivated.

The Central Basin

Geologists say that the plateau of the Highland Rim once covered the entire area now called the Central Basin. It was raised by some subterranean pressure to form a cracked structure shaped like an inverted saucer, now called the Nashville Dome, with its center near Murfreesboro. The breaking up of the protective strata of rocks caused the dome to erode 300 to 400 feet or more below the surface of the surrounding Highland Rim and form a huge basin. Around this basin was a left a narrow, crenelated escarpment of tangled hills and valleys facing the center of the vanished Nashville Dome. The horizontal outcroppings of limestone and shale on the hillsides show clearly the nature of the geologic structure underlying the Highland Rim and which once lay over the entire Central Basin.

Geologist R. S. Bassler, in his *Stratigraphy of the Central Basin,* describes the rock strata in the hills south of Woodbury, from



CANNON COUNTY

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the top down, as Fort Payne chert (a decayed, flinty limestone), Chattanooga shale (black, called slate in Cannon County), massive layers of Cannon limestone (yellow, mottled, and dove), Hermitage limestone (rubbly clay, dirty-blue, mudstone, sandy shale, thin-bedded blue), Lowville limestone (thin-bedded blue, thicker dove, massive dove, massive light-blue dove, gray-blue dolomite), Lebanon limestone (thin-bedded blue and dove, heavy-bedded subcrystalline, thin-bedded blue and dove). Most of these strata are visible in the cuts along the Jim Cummings Highway from the Basin to the Highland Rim. These various formations fall under two geological classes called, from the top down, Mississippian and Ordovician.

In a small area on the ridges and in the hollows two or three miles east of Woodbury, on both sides of U. S. Highway 70S, a peculiar type of rock is found, called geodes by geologists. They lie on top of the ground or in the beds of creeks and branches where they have been washed by thunderstorms. Many of them have been picked up in the past by children and sold to tourists coming by on the highway. John Haywood, in his *Natural and Aboriginal History of Tennessee* (1823), takes note of these rock formations. He describes them as

> . . . masses in rounded forms, inclining to elliptical, with tuberous excrescences, like those of large Irish potatoes. They are of dark color on the outside, and of the size generally of large cymblings, in some other countries called squashes. The centre is hollow, with loose particles in it of the like sort as those which occupy the interval between the hollow and the exterior. This hollow is lined with a thin crust of lamina of red dirt of a deep tinge. The interval between this and the interior is occupied by small crystallized pieces of the form of diamonds, with angular points, which pieces are incorporated and run into each other, no one being wholly separated and distinct from its neighbour. The whole mass has the appearance and suggests the idea of matter conglomerated while in a plastic state, by rolling up the hill, till it reached the summit where the waters were not of depth and force sufficient to move them any further, after which petrification and crystallization took place, the materials contracting toward the surface, and of course leaving

the centre hollow. The angular pieces, in the shape of diamonds, will scratch glass.

Another theory of the formation of the geodes is that they were formed when a bolt of lightning struck the ground containing sand. The sand melted and solidified into the crystallized forms Haywood has described. People called them lightning balls. Another theory is that the geodes were formed by water dripping through pre-formed cavities in the limestone strata, leaving behind their crystalline deposits. When the limestone weathered away, being softer than the ball of quartz, it left the geodes lying exposed on the surface of the ground.

But to one coming upon one of these strange rocks, with its marked convolutions that look like the surface of some ancient petrified brain, all of these theories seem inadequate. They raise more questions than they answer.

Associated with the geodes, but not confined to their limited area, the close observer may find short sections of crinoid stems, pieces of the sea lily, a plantlike animal that grew in the shallow seas that once covered the land. Here, too, one may find pieces of stone made up of the shells of gastropods and skeletons of fish and the claws and shells of crabs.

Near the Rim, the ridges and hollows are tumbled and narrow. In the western portion of the county, the hills are fewer, and the hollows broaden into valleys with deep deposits of topsoil, sometimes as much as six feet thick. Killebrew, who had such a bleak view of the Highland Rim, was impressed with the soils he found there. "The bottoms are rich," he said, "loamy and pebbly, easily worked and highly productive. They are esteemed of great value. . . . There are no abandoned fields to be seen."

This was true also of the hillside soils, though they were not, because of steepness, so easily worked. Unfortunately, most of this fertile hillside soil has been washed away. Many a hill farmer has watched the yellow torrents during thunderstorms rush down his tilted pastures of lush bluegrass and fields of corn and ruefully said, "There goes my good dirt down to settle on some big rich man's bottom." So most of the hillsides once widely

cultivated with mule and turning plow and bulltongue and double shovel and hoe have been returned at best to pasture. Some of it has been abandoned to hackberry and thorntree and blackberry briar and buckbush.

Drainage

Stone's River drains the hill section of the county south of the Dividing Ridge. The chief streams flowing into the river on the north side, from Short Mountain west, are Young Hollow, Mason Hollow, Rockhouse Branch, Seal Hollow, Cavender Branch, Doolittle Branch, Rush Creek, and Locke Creek. Streams flowing into the river from the east and south are Shinbone Hollow (formerly Elledge Hollow), Parchcorn Hollow, Hill Creek, Hollis Creek, and Brawley's Fork. Brawley's Ford is fed by numerous branches, the two largest being Carson Fork and Smith Fork.

North of Dividing Ridge and Short Mountain, the Central Basin is drained by the headwaters of Dry Creek, Clear Fork, Wilmouth Creek, Cannell Creek, Sycamore Creek, Hurricane Creek, and Saunder's Fork, all with their numerous hollow feeder branches.

On the Highland Rim, the main streams, north to south, are Mountain Creek, which originates at a bluff spring near the top of Dick Taylor Mountain, Charles Creek, Youngblood Creek, Bullpen Creek, McMahan Creek, and Duke Creek. They all flow east, because of the eastward tilt of the Nashville Dome structure, into Barren Fork and Collins River, tributaries of Caney Fork.

The names of many of these streams sound more impressive than they are. Most of the creeks are merely branches, dry much of the time except in the wet seasons of winter and spring and during summer storms. Then, they can rush and roar and carry farm stock away, and people, too, if they get in their way.

Early Roads

When Davidson County was created in 1783, North Carolina directed that a road be built from Clinch River in East Tennessee to Nashville. A road of sorts, called the Wilderness Road,

was opened in 1785. Its course lay by way of Crab Orchard, where it encountered Spencer Hill, the west side of which was so steep that a man on foot found the descent hazardous, especially if he were leading an animal that might tumble upon him. Once down, however, he found a pleasant, level plain for some distance, and, if he were there in springtime, he might be treated to the sight of wild crabapple blossoms. From there on, however, he had a dreary journey, for the road went some 50 miles over an eroded and rugged plateau, which in summer might be almost waterless, to Flat Rock near Monterey. Off the plateau, the road turned down Flynn Creek to the Cumberland River. Crossing there, it ran north of the river by way of General Winchester's land near the present site of Gallatin and on to Nashville.

Parts of this route had been used by "long hunters" James Smith and Uriah Stone, the latter for whom Stone's River was named, when they came to the Cumberland River area in 1766. The road was little more than an old Indian trail, called Tollunteeskee. It was dangerous, since much of it lay on land still belonging to the Cherokee, and many emigrants still chose not to use it, instead going the long route to the Cumberland settlements by way of Cumberland Gap and the Kentucky Wilderness.

In 1787, the road was improved by a small group of men under the leadership of James Robertson and others, but it still was not wide enough for carts and wagons. A few large groups of emigrants made safe crossings under escort to the Cumberland settlements by 1788. Andrew Jackson was in one of these groups. It was not until 1792 that the road was made suitable for wagon travel. It was then known as the Walton Road. In 1795, the road was changed to fork at Flat Rock and run south of the Cumberland to the mouth of the Caney Fork at Walton's Inn, the present site of Carthage.

For the first time the road would accommodate wagons, and the new route brought emigrants fairly close to the future Cannon County. Traffic over the road soon became heavy. Harriette Arnow, in her *Flowering of the Cumberland,* noted that in 1796,

28,000 persons bound for Middle Tennessee and Kentucky paid ferry tolls over the Clinch River at Southwest Point (near Kingston). Emigrants were coming by every means possible—by wagon, by cart, on horseback, on foot, some pulling their own carts. The "North Carolina Wagon" was a frequent sight now on the road, a wagon so heavy, so crudely built, so high it took a ladder to load it, and with a "cowbelly" bottom that made everything placed in it roll or slide to the middle. When loaded, it took 12 mules to pull it.

In 1806, the federal government built a road from the Cherokee villages on the Hiwassee River in southeast Tennessee, following more or less closely the Old Black Fox Trail to the vicinity of Murfreesboro. The western end of this road was known as the Stone's River Road. It is described in William Meyer's *Indian Trails of the Southeast* as beginning in Cherokee country in southeast Tennessee and crossing

> Sequatchie Valley about five miles south of the present site of Pikeville; thence across the Cumberland Plateau to the Caney Fork River, a few miles up-stream from the falls, crossing the well-known Chickamauga path a short distance south of Rock Island; thence to the junction of Mountain Creek with Collins River; thence up the north side of Mountain Creek to the present line of Warren and Cannon Counties, from which it continued down the Elledge Hollow, to Stone's River, then down the river to Woodbury; thence by Readyville, passing just in front of Readyville mill . . . keeping along the river valley, passing north of Murfreesboro, to Old Jefferson, thence to Nashville.

Mary Wood, Cannon County Historian, says that this road, after it left Elledge Hollow and of necessity forded the river several times, went north of the river near the mouth of Rockhouse and continued on the north side until it reached the big spring on the north side of the river at the present site of Woodbury and crossed there to the north end of Tatum Street on the northwest corner of the square. From there, it continued south of the river to some distance below town where it was forced back to the north side by high bluffs and hills.

When the traveller on this road had braved the hazardous

Spencer Hill at Crab Orchard and endured the inhospitable Cumberland Plateau and safely reached the undulating plain of the Highland Rim, he still had the short, precipitous descent into the Central Basin ahead of him. There was no place where the descent was easy. The hills dropped off sharply into narrow, V-shaped hollows, where the road was often forced to follow the rocky channel of a branch for long distances, or at least ford the narrow stream bed again and again to take advantage of the smoother ground on either side.

Such a place was Elledge Hollow, down which Stone's River Road ran, with its perilous hill, which richly deserved its name of Shinbone. Long after 1900, a wagon and team could descend into this hollow only by bending the hickory brakepole nearly double and locking the hind wheels with another hickory pole to force the wheels to slide instead of roll. After reaching the bottom of the hollow safely, the traveler had the so-called road to contend with, which was as often in the branch bed as out.

In 1806, another road was built into the area of the future county. Walter Womack reports in *McMinnville at a Milestone* that White County, which then included most of Warren, appointed a committee made up of Charles Burks, John Burks, Richard Burks, Moses Perkins, and John Cantrell to lay out a road from "where Looney's Trace crosses Barren Fork of Collins River so as to meet a road from Deal's [Dale's] Mill [Liberty]." This road was known as the Short Mountain Road and facilitated settlement of the area.

By 1811, a road had been built crossing the Cumberland Plateau from Kingston and passing through McMinnville and intersecting the Stone's River Road at the future site of Woodbury. This road followed closely the present route of U. S. Highway 70S, except that it went down Hill Creek by Prospect Hill to Beaver Dam. Known as the Stage Road, it superseded the Stone's River Road.

Early Settlement

Nearly all of the settlers in the county came from North Carolina and Virginia by way of East Tennessee. The census of

1850 lists 640 Cannon Countians born in North Carolina and 407 born in Virginia. The next in number were from Maryland, 28 of them, and 12 from Pennsylvania. Nearly all of them were Scotch-Irish and English. A few were German. Most of the people in the county today are descendants of these settlers.

The western part of the county was the first to be settled by the white man. Until after the Third Treaty of Tellico in 1805, lands east of Woodbury belonged to the Cherokee and were inhospitable to settlement. Sterling Brown's *History of Woodbury and Cannon County, Tennessee*, published in 1936, says that the first known settler in the county was Blake Sageley, who settled about three miles from the future site of Bradyville in 1784 and built a log house there, which still stands. But there is room for doubt that the first Sageley in the future county was Blake. Land records in Davidson County for the 1780s and 1790s show no Blake Sageley, and neither does the Rutherford County census nor the tax records for 1810. Rutherford County records do show that a John Sageley registered the survey of a grant on September 1, 1809. In October of 1829, John, apparently near death, gave his house and land to Blake Sageley, apparently his son, and his personal property to Mary Sageley.

Thomas G. Webb, DeKalb County Historian and a descendant of the Sageleys, has done research in the Sageley family history. His findings are that John was born before 1765 and apparently died in 1829. His son Blake was born in 1806 and died in 1891. (The earliest inscribed memorial in the family cemetery near Bradyville is to this Blake Sageley, which gives his birth year as 1800. A cairn is apparently to an older Sageley, but it is without inscription.) Blake's son, B. L. (Polk) Sageley, said in his Civil War Veterans' Questionnaire, now in the State Library and Archives in Nashville, that his father, Blake, was born at Bradyville and had lived there all his life. No documentary evidence bearing on when a Sageley built his house has come to light. John's life span (before 1765 to 1829) would have allowed him to be there in 1784. One factor favorable to his being there in that year was the building of Fort Nash on Nickajack Trail, between the headwaters of Brawley's Fork and

The Blake Sageley House, southwest of Bradyville on the Beach Grove Road, dates from around 1784 and is said to be the oldest in the county.

Garrison Fork, to protect settlers coming to the Nashville settlements. Yet it seems unlikely that settlers could have lived peacefully on Brawley's Fork in the 1780s when Nashville was ravaged by Indian attacks until 1795. Whenever the Sageley house was built, it was never in the State of Franklin, however, as has sometimes been claimed. The Cumberland District never joined the State of Franklin, which was confined to a portion of upper East Tennessee.

Tradition speaks of a widow named Mary Todd and two of her brothers who settled on Brawley's Fork in the 1780s. Brown's *History* says she lost five brothers to the Indians, though not on Brawley's Fork—three in Kentucky and two at Fort Nash. She attended an Indian dance dressed as an Indian maid and killed a bear that broke through the roof of her cabin. She lived to be 104 years old.

Among other early settlers in the southwestern part of the county were families by the name of Anderson, Arnold, Barkley, Barton, Bell, Bowen, Brandon, Brown, Bush, Byford, Carson, Cathey, Cawthon, Creson, Curlee, Dickens, Espy, Essary, Ferrell, Fowler, Gaither, George, Gilley, Grimes, Hollis, Holt, Hoo-

ver, Inglis, Jernigan, Jones, Knox, Lassiter, McCaslin, McElroy, McFerrin, Mitchell, Moore, Oliver, Parker, Patton, Petty, Pinkerton, Rains, Reed, Roberts, Robertson, Robinson, Rucker, Simmons, Simpson, Sissom, Stacy, Stroud, Taylor, Thomas, Underwood, Weedon, Whitfield, and Williams.

Before 1806, it is likely that most of the settlers came up Stone's River from Nashville to Old Jefferson, now under the waters of Percy Priest Lake. From there they went on up the river to its headwaters, locating land they had bought, probably sight unseen, in Nashville or land they had been granted after the Revolution by North Carolina. Land speculators like George M. Deaderick, Thomas Hickman, Robert Weakley, and others were active buying up land warrants from Revolutionary War soldiers who did not choose to risk their lives in the wilderness or could not afford to make the long journey to take up the land their warrants entitled them to (640 acres for a private soldier and up to several thousand for an officer, depending on rank). Bankrupt North Carolina had given them the land in lieu of pay for their services in the Revolution. This land the speculators, in turn, sold to settlers or to other speculators usually at a good profit. Many of them quickly became rich and important in the affairs of Nashville and of the state. George M. Deaderick, for example, in 1805, was president of the Nashville Bank, then the only bank in Middle Tennessee. He was one of the leading citizens who, in 1814, helped throw a city-wide reception for Andrew Jackson, who had just returned from the wars with the Indians to the south.

The Ruckers

Four brothers who bought such lands from the speculators were the Rucker brothers James, Thomas, Gideon, and Bennett. They came to Nashville from Amherst County, Virginia, in the 1790s and bought land along the East Fork of Stone's River from Old Jefferson, on the western edge of the future county of Rutherford, to Locke Creek in future Cannon County. These brothers were often of the same mind. For one thing, they all married sisters, daughters of William and Johanna Reade of Bedford County, Virginia. They were all

ministers, it is said, but not all ministers of the same church. They all established substantial plantations.

In 1797, James, the oldest, bought land at the present site of the Veterans Hospital north of Murfreesboro and at Betty's Ford. Thomas bought land at Old Jefferson. In 1798, Gideon bought a square mile of land on the western edge of the future Cannon County "situate . . . in the county of Davidson on the waters of the first creek that runs into the East Fork of Stone's River on the east side above the mouth of Bradley's Creek." The "first creek" was McKnight's, then without a name. This tract of land included a high hill that would become known as Rucker's Knob. On the same date, he bought another tract of land at the mouth of Locke Creek, next to land that had been granted to General Matthew Locke by North Carolina for his services in the Revolution. He bought both tracts from land speculator George M. Deaderick.

It is not known which of the two places in Cannon County Gideon Rucker started to develop first, but it seems to have been the one at Rucker's Knob, near the present site of Porterfield. At Rucker's Knob, he built a Georgian style brick house with an ell made of hewn red cedar logs. The date cannot be documented, but tradition says it was completed by 1804. The dependencies were also built of hewn red cedar logs. Two of them are still standing, one with what seems to be the remains of an original pigeon cote under the eaves.

Raising pigeons was probably a practice the Ruckers brought with them from Virginia. Raising pigeons was popular with the colonists because they had not been allowed to do so in England, where the privilege was restricted to the gentry class and noblemen who served pigeons at their tables.

In 1817, Gideon Rucker sold the place at Rucker's Knob to his younger brother Bennett. He had chosen by that time to concentrate his efforts on his land at the mouth of Locke Creek, including land that had originally been granted General Matthew Locke, who apparently never lived on his Stone's River property.

There were several advantages in moving to Locke Creek.

The first Gideon Rucker House, at Rucker's Knob near Porterfield, built around 1802-1804. Now the home of Mr. and Mrs. Robert L. Mason.

For one, it was on a good road, the Stone's River Road built in 1806 and the Stage Road built in 1811. For another, it had much river bottom land, and there was potential waterpower on the river. Near the banks of the river, he built a two-story house of hewn red cedar logs, with a central hallway probably not then enclosed. Behind it, he built another large log room, forming an ell, which was probably used as the kitchen. In between the two structures was another hallway, again probably left open. Today, both hallways are enclosed, and the cedar logs are covered with weatherboarding. The front is graced with a long porch that runs the length of the house, and above that a galleried porch. It is owned and occupied by Mr. and Mrs. Donald Paschal.

Gideon was a business man, as well as a planter and a minister. At his new location, he was soon providing several community services. By 1827, he owned a grist- and sawmill and a fifty-saw cotton gin and a gin house on the river between the mouths of Locke Creek and Hollis Creek. The gristmill was probably there earlier. Sterling Brown says in his *History* that

Thomas Rucker, Gideon's son, operated a gristmill there in 1814.

Gideon was increasing his family, too. By 1840, he and his wife Joycey had nine children. The boys were Thomas Sidney, James Harvey, and Samuel W. The girls were Elizabeth (who married a Lobby), Belinda (who married a Martin), Sally (who married a Bell), Sophia (who also married a Martin), Mariah (who married a Weedon), and Catherine (who married a Jarrett). Thomas Sidney married his first cousin Joyce, daughter of his uncle James Rucker, living 15 miles downriver. James Harvey was a schoolteacher.

In his will, dated 1842, Gideon distributed 2300 acres of land and 20 slaves among his children, asking them to keep slave families together as much as possible. He had already sold much of his land to his sons and sons-in-law and others. He died in 1842.

Across the river, at the mouth of Brawley's Fork, lived another early settler, Gideon's friend and fellow Virginian Joshua Barton, with his wife Jane Hale and their considerable family. Members of both families would be prominent in county affairs for several decades.

The second Gideon Rucker House on Murfreesboro Road, dating from around 1817. Now the home of Mr. and Mrs. Donald Paschal.

Both Gideon and Joshua were born in 1772, and both were buried near each other, Joshua on the brow of a hill bordering the south side of the river and Gideon between his house and the river. The Bartons' graves are still well marked. The Gideon Rucker graveyard has returned to cultivated field.

Back at Gideon's former residence at Rucker's Knob, his brother Bennett would soon pass 16 slaves and his land along to his step-daughter Miriam Barton and her husband Henry Goodloe. Miriam and her husband lived with the aging Bennett and his second wife Joanna Barton Wade. Bennett had had four children—a daughter (name unknown, who married a Matthews), a son named Ramsun (who married Charlotte Manning), a son named Gideon (who married Rebecca Wright), and a daughter named Betsy (who married a Lobby). Nothing further is known of these children of Bennett's. They are not mentioned in his deed of trust to Miriam and Henry Goodloe. The Bennett Ruckers and the Goodloes are buried in the family graveyard behind the house at the foot of Rucker's Knob. With the exception of nine years (1907-1916), the place has remained in the family since 1798.

Charles Ready

Another early settler in the western part of the county was Charles Ready. He probably came upriver, like the Ruckers, in 1802, having bought land enough for a plantation at the future site of Readyville, one of the grants North Carolina had made to General Griffith Rutherford. Ready built a log house on the south bank of the river, near a chalybeate (iron water) spring. When Rutherford County was created in 1803, he became one of the justices of the first county court, which met in Thomas Rucker's house at Old Jefferson. George Brandon, a friend of Ready's, built a house near him. A James Ready is known to have settled on Locke Creek in the early 1800s.

Mary Hall, Readyville historian, says that, according to one record, Charles Ready built a new house in 1804, but according to a letter written in 1829 by James Holmes, who married Ready's daughter Mary, Ready planned to build an elegant house, "the bricks for which are now ready."

"The Corners," built in 1829. Now the home of Mr. and Mrs. J. H. Oliver.

Charles Ready's brick house was one of the first such houses built in the eastern part of Middle Tennessee. It was large, three stories high, with walls 18 inches thick. He named it "The Corners," because it stood where two roads crossed. For some years, Ready ran an inn at his house, and it is said that Andrew Jackson sometimes stopped there on his way to and from Washington. When the Old Stage Road was built in 1811, a post office was established at the Ready house, with Charles as postmaster. It was then that the place was given the name of Readyville.

In 1811, Charles was one of 11 men appointed by the Legislature to choose a county seat for Rutherford County. He came near getting Readyville named for the site, losing out to Murfreesboro by one vote. In 1812, he built a mill dam across Stone's River and a water-powered gristmill between its banks and a hill. A ditch was cut to bring the water to the mill. This mill, in one form or another, has been in continuous operation since Charles Ready founded it.

Charles Ready tried to found a silk industry on his plantation, going to great trouble and expense to get the worms and set up the place to grow them. He set out white mulberry trees

Readyville Mill Dam today on Stone's River. The mill is situated about 1000 feet to the left.

around his garden and orchard to feed them and housed them in his attic. Some of the mulberry trees are still there. His silkworm industry, however, did not thrive, and he soon abandoned it. Ready had tried to succeed where the British had already failed. They tried the project in the American Colonies before the Revolution. They introduced the Asiatic white mulberry tree that Charles planted around his orchard and his garden.

The Ready's house was known as a center of refinement unusual on the frontier. When he died in 1859, the place was bought by his daughter Jane and her husband, Pete Talley. During the Civil War, it was host to several Confederate officers, once to Nathan Bedford Forrest. It passed out of the Ready family in 1886 and came to be in need of repair. Around 1920, it was bought by Mr. and Mrs. Lawrence Barker. It is now owned and occupied by Mary Lawrence Barker Oliver and her husband, J. H. Oliver. They have restored it to its original elegance.

John Howard Wood, another early Readyville resident, settled one mile southeast of Charles Ready's place in 1827, re-

Readyville Mill today. Established in 1812, it is still in operating condition, though presently closed.

ceiving land from his father John Wood, who had settled farther up Stone's River in 1808. John Howard, who somewhere picked up the title of major, built a large house called "Hill Top," taking four years to do it. Mary Hall describes it as "a tall, white weatherboarded two-story house, with an upper and lower portico extending across the front supported by six white columns . . . it was considered one of the finest of the Readyville area." The house is now owned and occupied by Mr. and Mrs. Ray Barker, who have modernized it but have taken care to preserve some of its original features.

Some other early families settling in the western part of the county from Readyville to Dividing Ridge were the Alexanders, Andrews, Braggs, Briggs, Davenports, Gaithers, Hares, Hendersons, Martins, McEwins, McKnights, Redons (or Redens), Sauls, Smiths and Travises.

Settlements in the Northwestern Section of the County

The northwestern section of the county extends roughly from Dividing Ridge to the Wilson and Dekalb County lines

and east to the headwaters of Sycamore Creek. The first settlements in the area were made about 1808 to 1810. By 1822, the population was dense enough to furnish a newly established Baptist church at Poplar Stand with 94 members. Family names of some of the early settlers were Alexander, Barrett, Bethel, Bogle, Bryson, Byrn, Carr, Caughanour, Cooper, Couch, Cox, Davenport, Duggin, Francis, Goad, Hancock, Harris, Higgins, Hubbard, Jetton, Johnson, Jones, Marshall, McAdoo, McKnight, Melton, Milligan, Mingle, Mullinax, Odom, Owen, Patrick, Peyton, Quarles, Rackley, Reed, Summar, Tenpenny, Tittle, Willard, and Wilson.

The North Central Section

The north central section extends roughly from the crest of Dividing Ridge north to the DeKalb County line and from the headwaters of Sycamore Creek to the western base of Short Mountain. The topography is rugged, and settlement was slower there than in the western and central parts of the county. Early family names in the area, as given in Brown's *History,* were Bogle, Bullard, Campbell, Dodd, George, Grizzle, Hale, Hancock, Higgins, Jetton, Keaton, Markum, McGee, Melton, Morris, Owen, Powell, Smithson, Summar, Tassey, and Wilcher.

Will T. Hale, in his *History of DeKalb County,* says that Alfred Hancock, one of the settlers, had a deep-seated sympathy for the poor. He would not sell his corn to anyone who could pay cash, and even then he charged below the going price.

Short Mountain

In general, the hill section of Cannon County was settled before the Highland Rim, probably because of the low fertility of the soil on the Rim. At least a near exception to this was the northeast part of the Rim at Short Mountain. Perhaps one reason for this was that the earliest road in the county, the Stone's River Road, followed Mountain Creek to within a short distance of Short Mountain. In 1806, also, White County, which then included most of Warren, had felt it advisable to lay out a road, called the Short Mountain Road, from Looney's Trace on the Barren Fork of the Collins River to the east end of the mountain, and it, too, probably facilitated settlement.

"Hill Top," home of the James Wood family, dates from around 1852 and was successor to John Wood's house at Woodville.

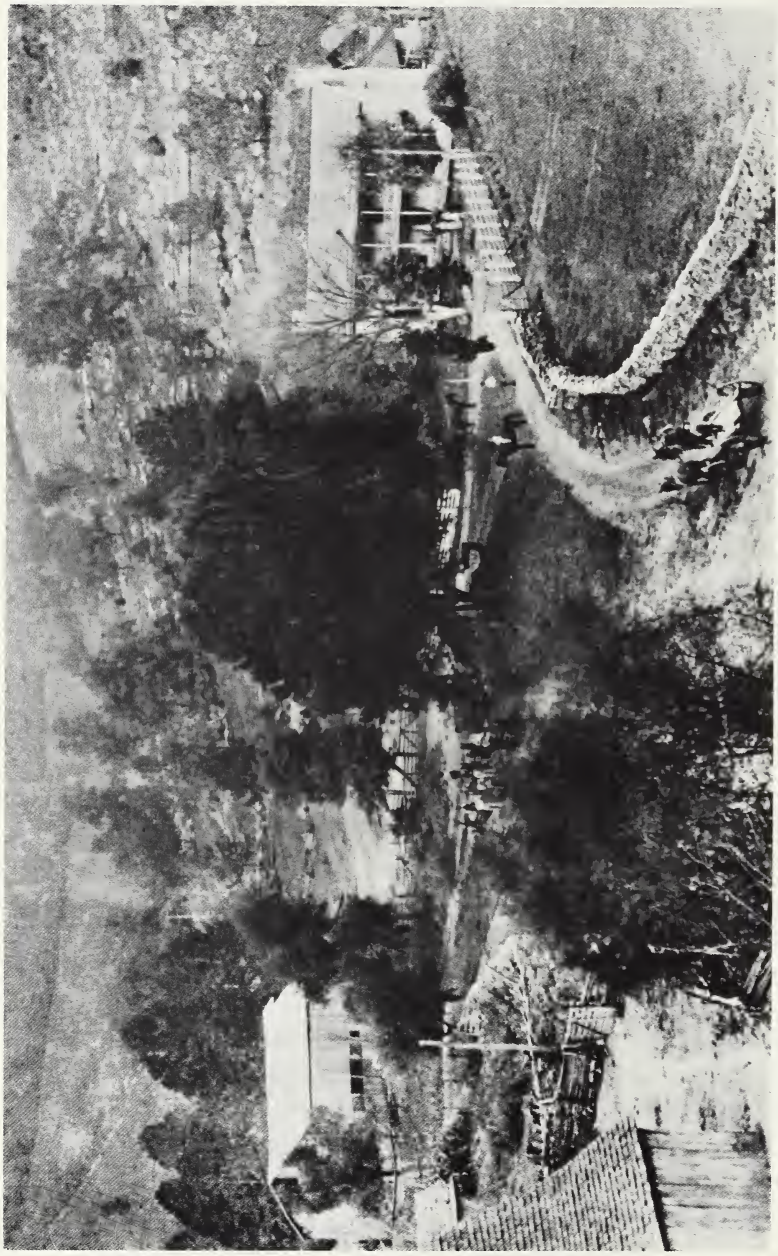
By 1810 to 1815, settlers were coming into the area in large numbers, taking up grants of land signed by Governor Willie (pronounced Wyély) Blount, half brother of William Blount, Governor of the Territory of the United States South of the River Ohio before Tennessee became a state. Among the names of these settlers were Blew (or Blue), Burger, Burkit, Campbell, Clark, Daniel, Denby, Elledge, Foster, Gilley, Grizzle, Gunter, Hawkins, Hendrixson, Hicks, Jones, Kersey, Maddux, Markum, Martin, Mason, Melton, Motley, Patterson, Purser, Seal, Smithson, Stephens, Van Hooser, Ware, Wood, and Worley.

Stone's River Valley, East of Woodbury

Settlers were coming into the Stone's River Valley between Short Mountain and Woodbury by 1806, when the Stone's River Road came from the east down Elledge Hollow and went on to Woodbury and beyond. These settlers had names like Armstrong, Ashford, Bailey, Brashears, Cavat, Cummings, Edding, Elkins, Elledge, Enis, Foster, Gann, Gilley, Halpain, Hammond, Higgins, Lance, Laurence, Melton, Merriman, Moore, Neely, Parton, Prater, Richardson, Rigsby, Seal, Stone, Sullens, Tittle, Todd, Winnett, and Young.

The Highland Rim

With the exception of the area east of Short Mountain, the Highland Rim was settled less swiftly than the rest of the county. This is the area that inspired the desolate description by



Owen Place, formerly Dallas Odom Place, on Hurricane Creek. The date on the chimney is 1830. The photograph was made around 1890. *Courtesy of Richard Shacklett and Myrtle Owen Campbell.*

Killebrew in his 1874 *Resources*. The prospects of settlers there, he thought, were extremely bleak.

Nevertheless, many people did settle on the Rim, or in the Barrens, as it was called in those days, and they endured and ultimately prospered—people with names like Bain, Baltimore, Banks, Bates, Berry, Bowen, Brown, Bush, Cathey, Cherry, Craft, Duke, Finley, Ford, Freese, Haley, Hipp, King, Lorance, Lusk, McMahan, Mears, Mills, Muncy, Murphy, Parker, Peeler, Pelham, Pendleton, Petty, Price, Rains, St. John, Sain, Sissom, Smithson, Spangler, Sparks, Spry, Stroud, Travis, West, Whittemore, Wimberley, Young, and Youngblood.

The Central Section

The central section of the county may be considered as Woodbury and its environs, including Rush Creek, Doolittle, Hill Creek, and Hollis Creek. The first known settler in this vicinity was John Wood, who came there in 1809 from Maryland by way of North Carolina. It would be reasonable to suppose that settlers were there before that, since the Stone's River Road had been in use since 1806. But there seems to be no record of them. John Wood bought two square miles of land on Stone's River and Hill Creek and built a two-story house of hewn logs in the bottom land south of the river and near the present site of Beaver Dam.

After 1811, the Old Stage Road crossed Hill Creek in front of Wood's house, and he operated a stage stand there. His son William made up a company of volunteers for the latter part of the War of 1812. Dr. Thomas Walter Wood, grandson of John, in a letter printed in the *Cannon Courier* in the 1920s and reprinted there March 15, 1976, says that the river bottoms on John Wood's place were used as a rendezvous for the county military muster in the early days. He says, further, that ten thousand Indians camped in front of the house and up Hill Creek along the Stage Road when they were on their march to Indian Territory in 1838 and that Nathan Bedford Forrest made the Wood house his headquarters on a brief stop in Woodbury during the Civil War. In 1846, he says, a big barbecue was

held in the woodland flat near the house for volunteers going to the Mexican War.

A store once stood at Beaver Dam, run by a James Turney. Sterling Brown, in his *History,* tells a story explaining how Beaver Dam got its name. The storekeeper there took furs in payment for goods in his store. Knowing little about skins, however, he was conned into accepting a muskrat pelt for a beaver and did not discover his mistake until he tried to sell it. He did not suffer his chagrin quietly. From that time on, the store was called Beaver Dam, and the name stuck to the place after the store was gone.

In 1814, when the federal government felt the need of establishing a post office in the vicinity, it chose John Wood's stage stand and appointed him postmaster. The post office was named Woodville. Thirteen years later, in 1827, the government moved the post office less than a mile west to Danville, with David W. Anglin as postmaster. The next year, Henry D. McBroom succeeded Anglin as postmaster at Danville.

There must have been two or three hamlets in the area, all competing for the status of town and all close together. Walter Womack, in *McMinnville at a Milestone,* quotes from a diary written by Julia Courtney. She had married Henry Conner of Mecklenburg, North Carolina, and was making a wedding trip through Danville in 1827. In her entry for August 29, she wrote: "Rode to Danville, 8 miles from Bates, for breakfast. They have a great spirit of town-making (a new word) but I think it would be better or rather look better if they would unite two or three of them together, it would certainly render them more deserving of a name—the roads rocky and hilly." In 1836, when Cannon County was created, the contending hamlets apparently did unite, under the name of Woodbury.

Some of the family names of other early settlers in the vicinity of Woodbury were Adams, Bailey, Barton, Blair, Breen, Brevard, Burger, Collins, Cooper, Cummings, Dennis, Dobbs, Elkins, Elrod, Fagan, Fare, Finley, Fisher, Ford, Foster, Fowler, Fugitt, Gannon, Gowen, Hale, Hammons, Hancock, Herriman, Hill, Hix, Hollandsworth, Jones, Keaton, King, Laughlin,

McAdoo, McFerrin, Mears, Miller, Morris, Neely, New, Orrand, Owen, Petty, Phillips, Powell, Preston, Reeves, St. John, Spurlock, Stephens, Stone, Stuart, Sullivan, Taylor, Tenpenny, Thompson, Turnley, Vance, Vandergrift, Vinson, Ward, Wharton, Wiley, Womack, and Young.

The Birth of a County

The population of the eastern edge of the Central Basin grew rapidly after the building of the Stone's River Road in 1806 and the Stage Road in 1811. By the mid 1830s, it was dense enough on the headwaters of the East Fork of Stone's River and Smith Fork in the hills and on the headwaters of Barren Fork on the Highland Rim to warrant the establishment of a new county. It would be made up of parts of three other counties, the seats of which, for many residents, were more than twenty miles away. It was too inconvenient and time consuming to ride horse or wagon or shank's mare on the rough and crooked, almost nonexistent roads along the ridges and down the hollows any time in the year or to travel in winter the bottomless mud roads in the Barrens to get to Murfreesboro or McMinnville or Carthage for those north of Dividing Ridge to record a deed, attend a court, or pay a tax.

On January 31, 1836, the Legislature passed an act creating a new county by taking portions of the counties of Rutherford, Smith, and Warren. The new county would extend from the beginning of the hills on the eastern edge of the Central Basin to some distance on the Highland Rim and from the northern line of the newly created Coffee County (January 8) in the south to the Caney Fork River to the northeast. Its name would be Cannon, in honor of Newton Cannon, then governor of Tennessee. At first, the name was to be Marshall, presumably in honor of John Marshall, chief justice of the United States, but Marshall lost out to Cannon just before the act was passed.

The boundary of the new county began on the ridge between Rutherford and Bedford counties, in the southwestern corner of the new county, and ran north by way of Readyville, splitting that village in two and leaving Colonel Ready's house

sitting astride the Rutherford-Cannon County line, and on to Rucker's Knob, past the future site of Porterfield, for 20 miles in all to the Wilson County line. There, it turned northeast and ran with the Wilson County line to the juncture of Wilson and Smith. From there, the line ran between Smith and Wilson counties for four miles, then with the line between Warren and Smith to the Caney Fork River. From there, it ran southeast with the river to Lick Creek, then south by varying courses, but never coming closer than 12 miles to McMinnville, to the Coffee County line. From there, it ran west to the beginning. The legislative act creating the county does not mention the newly created Coffee County, but Bedford instead, which would suggest the bill creating Cannon County was drawn up before the bill creating Coffee County was passed and was never corrected. A supplemental act, passed ten days later, was more specific about the line between Rutherford and Cannon and did take cognizance of Coffee County.

The Rhea map of 1832 shows the southwestern boundary of Wilson County coming to the top of Dividing Ridge. In 1838, another act was passed taking some land north of the ridge from Wilson and adding it to northwest Cannon.

The act creating Cannon County caused some confusion in the minds of some of the former Smith County residents living just north of Dividing Ridge. The language of the act somehow left the portion of the new county taken from Smith in political limbo. Fourteen days after the act was passed, a resident of Liberty named McWhirter wrote to legislators Trousdale, Campbell, and McClean, asking that the Legislature clarify the political status of the voters living in the so-called "Surplus" area. As he saw it, they were already detached from Smith, yet Danville was refusing to recognize them until after the first meeting of the county court, whose members were yet to be elected. This delay would deprive the residents of the "Surplus" area of their "sacred right of suffrage" and prevent them from helping choose the officials of the new county.

Their problem was soon to be resolved, but in quite another way than McWhirter expected. DeKalb County was formed the

next year, and the unclaimed area, or most of it, became part of that county. After this division, Cannon County would be less than half the size it was in 1836.

The act creating the county directed that the first county court be held in Henry D. McBroom's house until the court should choose another place. It did hold its first meetings there, but in August of 1837, it adjourned to meet at the house of John Fisher, an innkeeper, "for the Better convenience of Holding the same."

The legislative act of 1836 named commissioners and charged them with the responsibility of selecting a site for the county seat within five miles of Danville, securing at least 50 acres of land, and laying off the town. The commissioners named were Daniel M. Stewart and James R. Taylor of the Rutherford section of the new county, William Bates and Henry Trott of the Warren County section, and Abraham Overall and Leonard Lamberson of the Smith County section. The commissioners chose Danville as the county seat and changed its name to Woodbury, in honor of Levi Woodbury, then secretary of the treasury in President Jackson's cabinet. Having honored the governor of Tennessee, Newton Cannon, by naming the county for him, they may have chosen this oblique way of complimenting Andrew Jackson.

The commissioners did better than securing 50 acres of land for the county seat; they secured 62. Henry Trott, a surveyor, and William Bates laid out the town. Danville had only one street, Water Street, running east and west and paralleling the river. The commissioners added two other streets parallel to Water Street and named them Main and High streets. They then laid out cross streets, beginning with Manchester Street on the east side of town and moving westward to Church Street, Wintis, Tatum, Dillon, Doolittle, and College streets.

Sixty-four lots were laid out on lands sold or donated to the town by Adam Elrod, Mary Gannon, Patsey Gannon, W. Y. Henderson, Abel McBroom, H. D. McBroom, Nathan Neely, Joe Pinkerton, James R. Taylor, Henry Trott, Robert Vinson, and W. M. Young. Some of the lots already had buildings on

Home of Henry D. McBroom, now owned by Violet Wood Hite. The first session of the county court met in this building in 1836. It is still standing, though removed from its original location. *Courtesy of Walter McCrary and Charlie Harrell.*

them, in which case the owners reserved them when they sold or donated theirs to the town or reserved the right to buy the property back, taking into account the selling price of the property next to it.

The money raised by the sale of the town lots was used to build a courthouse and a jail. Both of these buildings were constructed by William Bates and were ready for use in 1838. The jail was built of brick. Unfortunately, it was built on low ground, at a bend in the river west of Doolittle Street, and it was washed away in the freshet of 1850. A second jail was built in 1852 on Wintis Street (now South Cannon Street). It served until 1880, when the present cutstone building was erected on the north side of the square.

The courthouse, which served until it burned November 13, 1934, was built of brick on the three-acre plot of ground pro-

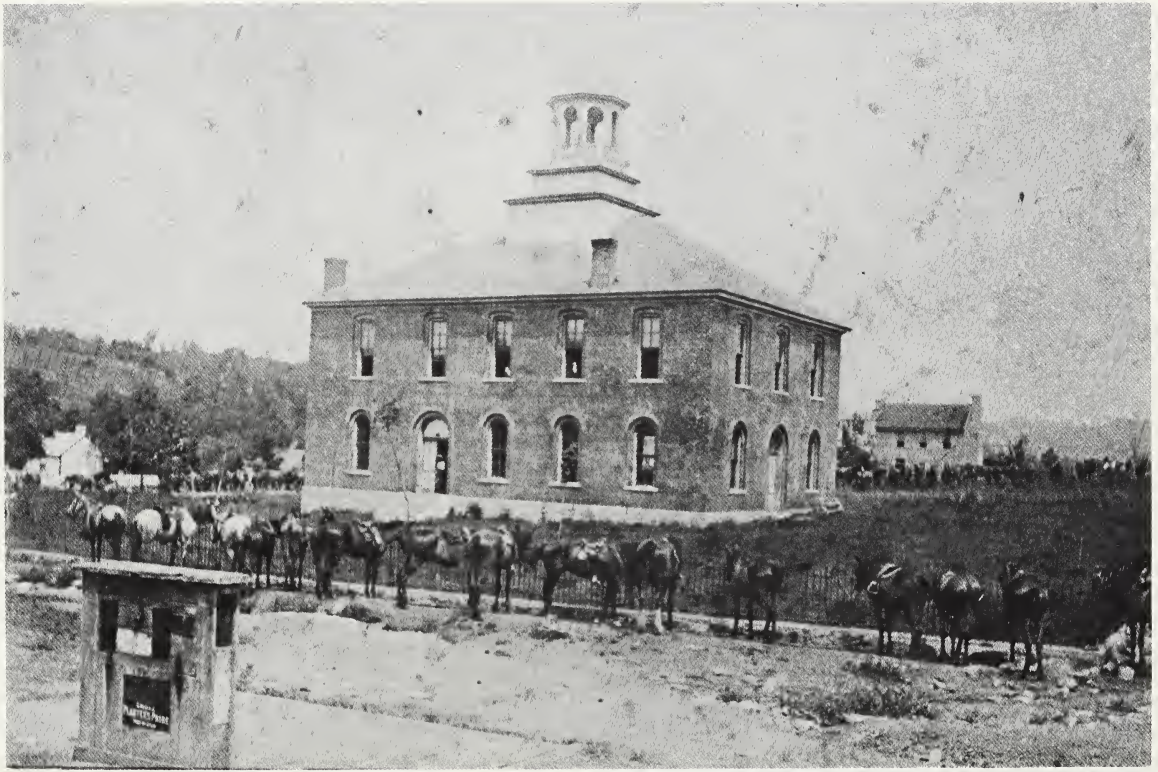
vided for it in the center of town. It was a plain, two-story, square structure, with a door on each of its four sides. Its front entrance, however, faced south on Main Street, although the busiest street in town was Water Street, on the north side. The area between the courthouse and all four streets was rocky and rough. The walkway, no more than a rough, unpaved path from Main Street to the south door, was steep and crossed a wooden culvert to reach the gate in the iron fence surrounding the courthouse yard. In rainy weather, the culvert was often flooded. The grounds remained in this condition until the early 1930s, when the Civil Works Administration improved it to its present condition.

The cost of the courthouse was $13,000. Its builder William Bates finished it off with a cupola made of sheet metal, the materials for which cost $60.25. Richard Shacklett, a descendant of William Bates, tells a story handed down in his family: Bates was so proud of his work that, on his own, he placed a spread eagle in gold leaf on the finished dome. Since this was not called for in the contract, the county court refused to pay for it. Bates became so enraged that he threatened to take the eagle down. The county court, reluctant to lose the eagle but still not wanting to pay for it, argued that it could not legally be taken off, since it was attached to the building. So, one morning early, Bates climbed to the top of the cupola, flapped his arms against his thighs and crowed like a rooster. Then he removed the eagle before anyone could stop him.

For the first two years of the county's existence, the main business of the county court was appointing road commissioners and instructing them to lay out roads in all sections in the county.

Life in the New County

> The citizens are industrious and energetic, but not enterprising . . . emigration to other states is very rare. The county is free from debt. . . . Infractions of the law are not common. Ease, peace and plenty characterize the county. . . . Nearly every farmer works himself, saves his earnings, and invests them in



Courthouse Square from the southeast corner in 1890s. County jail is at the right of the courthouse. W. R. New's stock scales are in left foreground. The saddle horses and mules are hitched to the courthouse fence. *Courtesy of Vinnie Leal New.*

> his own county. For this reason, land is higher in Cannon County than in Davidson. . . . The nearest railroad is the Nashville and Chattanooga, twenty miles from the county seat, and by this all the surplus produce is shipped. Stock is driven south on foot—mules, horses and cattle.

Thus, J. B. Killebrew described Cannon County in his *Resources of Tennessee* in 1874.

Life was simple and rugged for most people in the early days of the county—and well into the twentieth century. For families on the rich lands of the level river bottoms, life could be abundant and graceful, but there not many of these.

Some of the values of the people and what it took to prepare a young man to face the world can be seen in the following entries in the minutes of the county court in 1836:

> Burrel Farles
> Apprentice
> Thomas Elkins
>
> Thomas Elkins this day represents to the satisfaction of the court that Burrel Farles an orphan boy about the age of nine years kneeds the protection of the court and proposes to have the said Burrel Bound to him until he attains the age of twenty one years and agrees on his part to learn him the occupation of Farming and to take good care of him the said Burrel in every respect as is due an apprentice and at the end of the Term aforesaid Will give him a horse saddle and Bridle worth seventy five dollars and a good suit of clothing and a fur hat and such other things as is suited to an apprentice.

In the same year, Matthew Summers was apprenticed to James B. Summers, who would "have him taught to read and write well and cipher to the rule of three." He would also, when the apprentice became 21, "give him Horse Saddle and bridle worth a hundred dollars and a suit of Broad cloth."

For the settler and his family, of course, food and shelter were the first necessities of life. His first house was thrown up in haste, often soon to be replaced by a better one and the first one used as a kitchen. Both were made of logs, hewn and fitted at the corners so well that they would stand for upwards of 100 years. A few remain after more than 150 years. In the western

part of the county, the logs were of red cedar, which grew abundantly there. In the central and eastern parts, where cedar was scarce, the logs were of oak, ash, or yellow poplar. All four kinds were good choices, for they were resistant to termites and rot, especially the red cedar.

Most of the early houses were single rooms. Sometimes, they were double, usually connected with an open hallway, called a dogrun. A few such log houses were two stories high, with another log house behind, which might remain separate or be joined to the front structure by another dogrun. This was the forerunner of the familiar *L* or *T* structure farmhouse so often seen in the county today. Several are unrecognizable as log houses because they have been weatherboarded and their hallways enclosed. Inside, the logs have been covered with yellow poplar boards, and there is no hint of the original logs and chinking behind them except the thickness of the walls. Long porches run the length of the houses on the front and often the extension at the back.

A rare log house still exists uncovered with weatherboarding and unadorned, its clay clinking crumbled and fallen. The rest have disappeared through neglect and decay. A few have been incorporated into barns which have been built around them, a fact the observer would not suspect without inspecting the inside. The boards used in these early houses were made with a straight saw, sawn before the coming of the steam engine and the circular saw to Cannon County.

After building his house, the most pressing job facing the settler was clearing his fields. Crops had to be planted for next season's harvest. Nearly all the land in Cannon County was wooded. The hills and the valleys of the Central Basin were covered with huge trees—various kinds of oak, beech, yellow and white poplar, and white ash—with very little undergrowth. On the ridges adjoining the Rim grew the stately and versatile chestnut. On the Rim, the woods were thinner and the trees smaller, mainly of a kind of oak called blackjack and hickory and blackgum.

The settler had to clear this land for his crops the fastest

way he could. This meant cutting and burning the smaller trees. The large trees, in his hurry, were girdled and left to die while the corn crop grew under their barkless branches. Some of these huge trees stood like ghosts in the fields for years. Finally, when they were doughty and dry, they would be set on fire to burn slowly for days. In the night, they were tall red columns glowing in the dark.

Clearing ground grew to be the frontiersman's habit. It died a slow death in Cannon County. Every year, he pushed back the woods, clearing a patch or so above a bluff or, on the Rim, at the edge of a swamp. The clearing urge was reinforced by his burgeoning family and his children marrying off and needing space, in their turn, for their houses built farther back on what was coming to be spoken of as the old homeplace.

Corn was always the main crop in Cannon County, although well into the twentieth century, some wheat was grown, cut by a five-fingered scythe called a cradle. After each sweep with the scythe, the harvester swept the cut grain from its fingers and dropped it in a bundle for the shock. There, it would await the thresher, powered by two horses walking on a revolving drum, and be threshed and sacked for the mill.

Corn produced two crops. When it was mature, but while the leaves were still green, the farmer and his sons pulled fodder, which meant stripping off the long blades on the standing stalk and tying them in bundles to be hauled to the barn for winter feed. Children were kept out of school for this work. It was one of the work periods of the year deserving a name—like laying-by corn, wheat threshing, or hog killing. It was fodder-pulling time.

The corn itself was gathered later from the bare standing stalk and, in the hills, was hauled in a large sled called a slide, since no wheeled vehicle could be operated on the steep hillsides. In the valley bottoms and on the Highland Rim, of course, where the wagon or oxcart could be used, the slide was unnecessary.

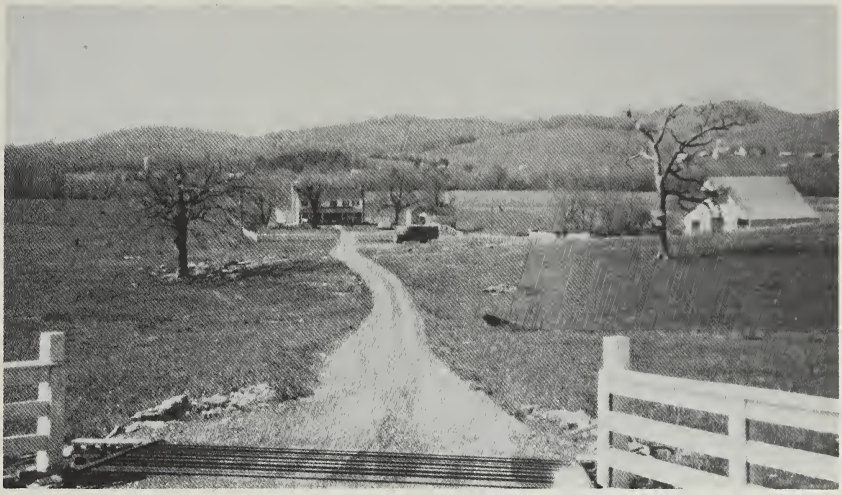
Pumpkin seeds were planted in the cornfields, and the pumpkins were gathered and hauled to the barn in the fall along

with the corn. They would be fed to cattle and hogs until well into the winter. Cornfield beans were planted in the spring with the corn, where they grew without attention and climbed to the tops of the stalks, producing an abundance of several kinds of beans: cutshort, navy, creaseback, October, goose, and soup. These were picked when the pods were dry and shelled on winter evenings while the family sat about the fire. On the edge of the cornfield, a little space was always left for broomcorn for the household brooms and popcorn that would be popped over the open fire and salted and buttered and eaten on long winter evenings.

There was always a garden near the house, fenced by chestnut or oak palings placed vertically close together so that no destructive animal could get through. In the spring, the men turned the garden ground and harrowed it smooth. From there on, it was the province of the women and small boys of the family. They laid off the rows, planted the butter beans and the stick beans (pole beans), which looked, when they had covered their sticks, like rows of Indian wigwams. Then there were the onions, cabbages, turnips, tomatoes, cucumbers—and a striped, golden-brown, fragrant little melon called a "plumgranny" for the children.

About the Fourth of July, the family braved the chiggers and picked blackberries, the men helping this time, because the corn was laid-by, plowed and hoed for the last time, and they were free. The berries grow wild in the pastures and at the edges of the woods. The housewife turned gallons of them into jams and jellies and deep-pan pies, but she canned most of them against the winter. "Eat what you can and can what you can't," said the farmer, and they did.

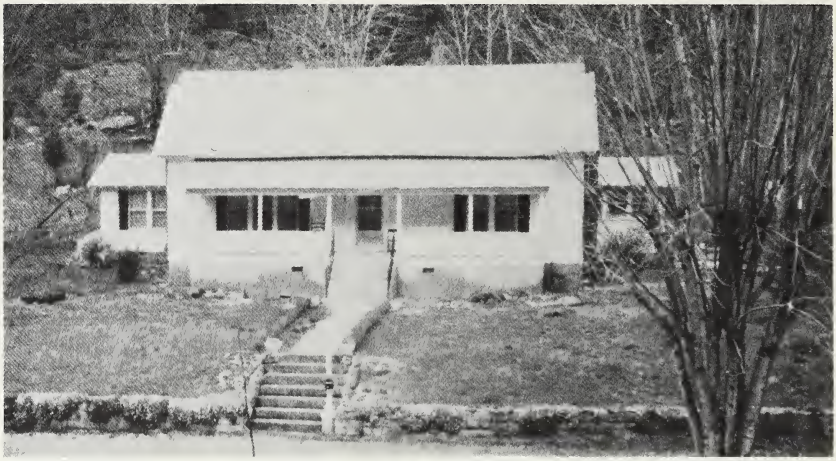
In summer and fall, there were apples and peaches to be picked and sliced and placed on a cloth to lie in the sun on the porch roof of chestnut or cedar shakes (called boards) with a thin cloth over them to keep the insects off. Or they might be sulfurated, to shorten the drying period. Then there were the turnips to be pulled and placed in a strawlined hole in the ground to keep them from freezing in January and February.



River bottom farm at Newhope near Readyville. Now the home of Mr. and Mrs. Milton Alexander.

With all this, the family were often short of food in late winter and certainly tired of their monotonous diet. By early spring, they were eager for something green. So the women were in the woods before the leaves were on the trees chattering away with neighbors they had not seen for three winter months and picking what they called crow's foot and the botanists call toothwort. It came up in broad green carpets in the sun-warmed leafy mold, and cooked in the pot with a hog's jowl like turnip greens, it made excellent "sallit." The coming of the crow's foot meant winter was over.

The settler built his house near a spring. In the hills, this was usually easy because of the numerous streams coming from the limestone strata on the hillsides and in the hollows and valleys. The water of some of these springs was lime laden—"hard water" it was called—and it left thin-layered deposits of lime on the bottoms of the iron "teakettles" used to heat it and was slow to suds in the washtub. Some of the springs were chalybeate, with a taste of iron and often a distinct smell of iron sulfide, if the water seeped through black shale, and it left rust stains in bucket and teakettle. These springs were thought to



The Sam Gilley farmhouse near the headwaters of Stone's River. Now the home of Mr. and Mrs. Jim Gilley.

be healthful, and when people passed one smelling like rotten eggs, they often stopped to take a drink and perhaps fill a jug and take it home for the family.

On the Highland Rim, springs were fewer than in the hills, although several abundant ones were there, like the ones at the sites of the old Geedville school and at Cold Springs school near Ivy Bluff. But on the Rim, where there was no spring, it was easy to dig a well in the soft, almost rockless ground—that is, after penetrating a thin layer of chert. These wells were usually three or four feet in diameter and about fifteen to twenty feet deep. They were dug with pick and shovel, the loosened earth being brought up in buckets by windlass. The water was "free-stone," or "soft water," tasted slightly acid and lathered freely.

The population of Cannon County increased from 7143 in 1840 to 12,197 in 1890, when it was greater than at any other time in the county's history. As the population increased, houses were often built some distance from a spring, especially on the ridges, and water was carried in buckets from a spring deep in the hollow below. The resident of one such house, on a ridge on the south side of Short Mountain, solved his problem ingeniously by rigging up a system of windlass and wire strung

on a line of posts from his house to the spring at the bottom of the hollow. He let a bucket down by rope and pulley to the pooled spring, where the weighted bail dipped the bucket under the water, filling it. Then, he brought it up, swinging and splashing, to the top of the hill and his kitchen door.

Another resident, at Cave Spring on Doolittle, set up a hydraulic ram, which ran water from the spring down hill at an angle through pipes and pushed some of it up the hill to the house considerably above the level of the spring. At the house on the brow of the hill, the fresh spring water ran as steadily as a natural spring, without further attention. This system operated well into the 1920s, when it was destroyed by a bulldozer.

Springs had more uses than furnishing water for the household. Often, especially in the bottom lands of the Basin, stone houses were built over them, and they became cool storage places in summer and warm storage places in winter. But whether houses were built over them or not, the springs were used for cooling milk and making it ready for the churn and cooling the butter and buttermilk after it was churned.

The early Cannon County resident depended on hunting for much of his meat. But bear, buffalo, and then the deer were hunted out. Only small game was left, finally—the turkey, the squirrel, and always the tasty, abundant, ubiquitous rabbit, nature's meat locker for man as well as other predators. The raccoon was a delicacy, and when times were hard, people did not disdain the possum and the groundhog. On these animals, many a family made it successfully through the winter.

But the main source of meat was the farmer's hog, which often ran free in the woods and fattened on chestnuts and beech mast in the fall. Or, if the nuts were in short supply, it was enclosed in a square pen made of fence rails and fed with corn and slops until it was so fat it was unsteady on its feet. On a suitable day in November, it was killed and dressed and cut up into the hams and shoulders and middling meat and sausage meat and backbone and ribs that would take the family far into the winter and maybe into the spring. Not the least of these products were the cracklings left from the rendering of the

Dripping Springs in Dug Hollow on Stone's River.

lard. These, the housewife carefully saved and used to make short'nin' bread. The rest she saved, along with skins and scraps of meat and the cleaned guts, and when enough red lye had dripped from the ash hopper in the back yard, she made a slimy, ropy soap to use in the washtub. The head and ears were used to make souse, and the bladder was used by the children to make a balloon. Nothing was thrown away except the lungs (called lights). For these, there was no use.

Next to horses and mules, the cow was the most essential animal to the settler's survival. She was not a Holstein, Guernsey, or Jersey, but a nondescript red, white-faced, ungainly animal with horns curving toward the center of her forehead. She foraged for most of her food. The good manager had one cow fresh and a dry one that would become fresh when the fresh one went dry. The cow roamed the pastures and woods and came in at milking time for a few nubbins and to feed her calf, which got half her milk. The rest went to the family table. After

the calf was weaned, the cow sometimes was not interested in coming in at milking time. Then, a boy of the house had to go out into the pastures and woods and find her and drive her home. She was often hard to find. For this reason, she wore a bell, the clanking of which added much to the domestic sound.

The smart cow, however, knew how to wreck this plan if she did not want her pastoral or sylvan peace disturbed, as she often did after a late afternoon shower. She would stand stock still deep in a leafy bower of her clever choosing so the bell would not ring. This stance she could hold until well after the time anyone was likely to come out in the night to drive her in.

Of all the farm animals, the cow was closest to the family. Among the children, she and her calf were often pets. She deserved her position, because, for some families, she might be all there was in the dead of winter that stood between them and the wolf at the door.

After supper, the family sat around the hearth while the roaring fire widened the circle, the mother mending clothing or knitting, the father mending shoes, the rest shelling the cornfield beans gathered on mellow October days. Often, they ate hickory nuts and popcorn and always, when it was available, the rich, delicate chestnut. On the mantel, the tall, rectangular clock, bought from some wandering peddler for $6 of fur money, ticked calmly away, breaking out on the hour with a whirring burst of rapid strikes.

The mother, father, or a grandparent might sing a ballad from the past—a song centuries old from England or Scotland or, behind that, even from the continent of Europe. These songs are heard little, if at all, now. Radio, which might have been expected to keep them current, then TV and other forces, have actually hastened their demise. "Country" music makers have taken their place—the new balladeers in Western hats and pseudo-hillbilly suits who write their own and sing each other's songs. While we may celebrate their creativity, we may deplore the erosion of some of the best poetry and story telling ever sung—songs like "Lord Randal," "Lord Thomas," "Lord Lovel," "The Lass of Loch Royall," "The Demon Lover," "Hangman,

Hangman, Hold Your Rope," "Barbara Allen," and "Chevy Chase."

These, and many more, were sung in the Appalachian area probably more than anywhere else. Couched in coves, walled in by precipitous mountains and wooded hills, families lived, enjoyed, suffered, and sang of a way of life their distant ancestors knew: lords, ladies, and others—a far cry from the isolated lives they lived.

Some of the ballads, or fragments of them, sung in Cannon County were written down in the 1930s and 1940s from the people who sang them. Dema Bowen of Geedville sang several of them. "Lord Randal" was one. She said she had learned it from her father 50 years before. The ballad links Cannon Countians with over 300 years of tradition in England and longer than that in Italy. It's the story of a young man who has visited his sweetheart who fed him "eels fried in a pan." He comes home sick. His mother asks, "Who got your leavin's?" Lord Randal tells her his sweetheart's hawks and hounds ate them and they died. The mother then asks her son what he leaves to various members of his family, and finally what he leaves to his sweetheart. The son replies, "Six cords of green white-oak to bake her bones brown." Versions of this ballad in Italy tell the same story, differing only in detail: "I got eels broil'd in broo," Lord Randal tells his mother. In some versions in Germany, Sweden, and Scotland, Lord Randal is a child murdered by a jealous stepmother. The story may be based on some crime of the Middle Ages. Or it may have been formed by literary odds and ends brought to Europe from the Middle East by pilgrims and crusaders. (See Francis Child, *English and Scottish Popular Ballads in America.* See also Countess Martinengo-Cesaresco, *The Study of Folk-Songs.)*

Samuel Pepys knew the ballad "Lord Thomas" in London in the 1660s. Mrs. Bowen sang it in Cannon County in 1940. "But I don't sing many of the old songs now," she said. "I have to keep up with all the hits." In this gory ballad, Lord Thomas asks his mother to help him decide which of two girls to marry. She knows he loves Fair Eleanor, the prettier one, but the homelier one has "houses and lands," and this swings the mother's

decision. Lord Thomas "jingles at the ring" of Fair Eleanor's house and invites her to the wedding. When she arrives, she laughs aloud at the bride's looks, and the bride cuts off her head. Lord Thomas is enraged and cuts off the bride's head. He throws the sword so hard upon the floor that it rebounds and pierces his own heart. Thus, the mother is left with the fruit of her bad advice. She has to bury all three.

Mrs. Bowen also sang the ballad "Lord Lovel," about a lad who looked for the ideal girl in foreign lands while leaving her at home. He finds this out too late, and the ballad typically ends in the deaths of the two lovers, and they are buried side by side. A rose grows on her grave and a briar on his, but they entwine.

"The Lass of Loch Royall" was sung in our own household, though that was not what it was called. It's about a young girl who seeks the father of her unborn child. She travels to Lord Gregory's castle and "tirls at the pin." Gregory's mother answers and asks the girl for proof of her association with her son. The girl shows a ring, but the mother then says Lord Gregory has gone to sea. Lord Gregory discovers his mother's deception too late, and again the ballad ends with the death of the two lovers.

Another ballad Cannon Countians sang was "Black Jack Davy," a variant of the Scottish ballad called "The Daemon Lover," about a handsome, suave, dark-looking young man who seduces a carpenter's young wife and takes her off to hell. Another ballad often sung was "Hangman, Hangman, Hold Your Rope," about a girl about to be hanged because no one of her family will pay her ransom. Her lover arrives in the nick of time and pays her captors. Versions of this ballad, Francis Child says, were found in Sicily, Finland, Estonia, and Russia.

"Barbara Allen" was the ballad most often heard in Cannon County. It seems to have been a favorite in England and Scotland also. Samuel Pepys said in 1666: "In perfect pleasure I was to hear Mrs. Knipp sing, and especially her little Scotch song of Barbary Allen." Oliver Goldsmith liked the ballad, too. "The music of the finest singer is dissonance," he said, "to what I felt when our dairy-maid sang me to tears with . . . the 'Cruelty of Barbary Allen.' "

A fragment of "Chevy Chase" existed in Cannon County as

late as the 1940s. The ballad tells the story of a great battle and dreadful scene of death caused by one of the feuds which raged between the families of English and Scottish noblemen. Shakespeare dramatizes the feud in the *King Henry IV* plays.

So the early Cannon Countians were not as far removed from their heritage as they might have thought, but they brought some of it to their fields and hearthstones to "tirl at the pin" or "tingle at the ring" of memory.

The chestnut tree, the most versatile tree in all the woods, has been gone now for more than half a century, killed by a deadly blight. It made by far the best rails of any tree, splitting almost voluntarily ahead of the dogwood glut at each stroke of the hickory maul. It furnished the boards for the roof, split with mallet and froe. Above all, it furnished the winter's supply of nuts to eat before the chimney fire.

In the western edge of the county, where the chestnut tree did not grow, the red cedar supplied the rails for the fences and boards for the roof, but, unlike the chestnuts, it was knotty and often hard to split. It would outlast the chestnut, however, because of the oily content of its wood.

In the winter, the men and boys of the family hunted the woods for fox, raccoon, polecat, and possum—walking with the dim lantern through the leafless woods and listening for the telling bark of the dog at the tree or on the trail. The dog would tree a raccoon, perhaps, and the hunters would shoot it while the raccoon itself directed the fire by the lantern light reflected in its eyes. Or they might cut the tree with an ax, if it were small enough, holding back the frenzied dog and letting him loose to catch the stunned and confused raccoon just after the tree had struck the ground.

Sometimes, the hound struck a fox's trail and followed it for hours, until the fox, tired out by the chase, sought the deceptive safety of the den. There, the hunters set a trap, cleverly hidden in the dirt at the mouth of the den and walled up the entrance with heavy rocks. But the fox knew where the danger was and, for weeks, stepped everywhere but on the trigger of the trap, until finally, starved and unwary, it made the fatal step and the trap snapped shut on the lean foot.

Possums and polecats could be caught almost any night, with only the dog, but often they were caught with steel traps set at the mouths of open dens. Or they were caught by the numerous deadfalls set with heavy flat rocks and checked every day to take out the head-crushed animals, some of them still squirming under the fallen stone.

All of these animals were carefully skinned so as not to cut the pelt more than necessary and thereby decrease its value. The skin was turned wrong side out and stretched over a pointed board the shape of a slender gothic window and hung in a row along the smokehouse wall. After they had cured, they were taken off the boards, turned right side out and hung along with others to await the coming of the itinerant fur buyer, or to be taken to Woodbury on First Monday and sold to a buyer who stood beside his hitched horse and buckboard and studied the furs with critical eye, grading them number one, two, three, and four—most of the time a number or so below what the hunter expected.

Sometimes the hunter refused the offers and packed up his furs and shipped them off to a fur-buying house in Louisville or St. Louis, houses that had been there since the French came into the Ohio and Mississippi Valleys. This market sometimes paid better, sometimes not, the grader there being often as severe as the First Monday buyer in Woodbury. The fur market declined until, in the 1920s, it almost disappeared. But when it was even moderately good, the family bought much of its clothing with the furs it sold.

The early Cannon Countian often kept bees. If he did not have a hive, he could get one by watching the bees watering at the edge of his spring and noting the direction in which they flew. By following the bee line, he could find the tree where they lived. The procedure, then, was to wait until spring or early summer to cut the tree, split it open, and take out the honey, once in a while blowing among the bees the smoke from a smoldering rag he held in his hand.

By noting where the worker bees clustered, he found the queen, clipped her wings, and placed her in the new house he had provided for them. The rest of the bees then followed and

South side of the square in Woodbury, looking east, around 1915. *Courtesy of Richard Shacklett.*

settled down contentedly in their new home. At night, the settler would carry the hive back to his yard and set it against the garden palings. There, the bees would fill their new home with honey and swarm the next season. In a few years, he could have an apiary of more than a dozen hives.

The settler housed his bees in sections of a hollow tree, cut out of a gum tree, usually, and capped and bottomed with heavy boards. He left a small opening at the bottom for the bees to go in and out. These houses were called bee gums, a name which applied long after they were made of sawmill lumber and shaped like rectangular boxes instead of tree trunks. At every meal, the family would have honey in the comb.

The jack was an important animal on the Cannon County farm until well into the twentieth century. He was small, homely, considered stupid and seemed to know it. No animal on the farm was less aggressive or had less seeming pride than the unassuming jack. He accepted the roughest food with gratitude and suffered indignities with philosophic calm—including, at breeding time, the haughty reception of the reluctant mare.

Yet he was father to the wonderful, nimbler, handsomer mule, without which the farms of the county could not have been worked, especially the hillsides, the finer strung horse being temperamentally unsuited for such arduous tasks. The jack reacted quickly to almost nothing; yet he was almost the only equine on the farm that frequently raised his voice, of which nothing much favorable can be said, except that many an ear has been pleased to hear his brassy bray on the midnight air.

In the fall, the farmer cut his patch of sorghum cane and took it to the molasses mill, where the juice was extracted between revolving drums turned by a mule walking a monotonous circle. It was a time of festivity, with young and old going to the mill at night in party fashion while the gray-green juice boiled down to a thick, golden brown.

A visiting Englishman wrote home about it, saying the food he liked most here was called molasses, spoken of in the plural because it tasted better that way. They were mixed with butter,

stirred with a knife, and eaten with a kind of scone called hottens, which the hostess was continually bringing from the stove to the table and saying, "Have another hotten."

The War Years

The Revolutionary War

Upwards of 20 Revolutionary War soldiers are known to be buried in Cannon County, most of them in the Bradyville, Woodbury, and Short Mountain areas. Their names were James Barkley, John Barkley, Enock Berry, John Bynum, David Carroll, Thomas Dale, Isaac Eoff, John Fagan, David Faulkenberry, Robert Fowler, Joseph Haas, John Kearsey, Gibson Lane, Hardy Lassiter, Joel Mears, John Smithson, John Stephens, Benjamin Todd, and John Turnley.

John Turnley served with General Washington part of the terrible winter at Valley Forge in 1777-1778. His discharge papers, signed by Brigadier General George Weedon, read: "I do hereby certify that John Turnley, a soldier in the South Virginia Regiment, has faithfully served his time of enlistment and is hereby discharged. Given under my hand and seal at Valley Forge Camp, February 13, 1778."

The War of 1812

The area now within the bounds of the county, according to Brown's *History* sent ten officers to the War of 1812: Captain David Patton, Ensign James Tittle, Captain James Barkley, Ensign David Ford, Ensign David Faulkenberry, Second Major Robert Jetton, Captain Burton McFerrin, Lieutenant David McKnight, Lieutenant William Wood, and Ensign Josiah Spurlock. Captain William Wood, son of John Wood of Woodville, made up a company of volunteers for the latter part of this war. A younger brother, aged 17, joined it. James Ready of Locke Creek also served in this war.

The War with Mexico

Several Cannon Countians volunteered for military duty in the war with Mexico, but all of their names are not known. Dr. Thomas Wood, grandson of John Wood of Woodville, told of a big barbeque held in a river bottom of John Wood's estate in

1846, the purpose of which was to raise a company of soldiers to serve in the Mexican War under Captain John H. Savage. Brown gives some of the names of this company: David Adcock, David Barrett, Eli Barrett, B. F. Cummings, Moses C. Cummings, Edmundson Elkins, J. S. Elledge, Thomas Fowler, Dillard Gannon, William Hendrickson, J. W. Lance, William Markum, Green Melton, John Melton, J. B. Mullens, Joshua Neely, David Smithson, William C. Smithson, J. H. Sullins, T. J. Vance, Sr., and James Young.

Some of those who joined other companies were James R. Gassaway, James Gibson, Dr. Reuben Hubbard, John E. Mason, Colonel George McKnight, Felix Miller, Hiram Morris, Robert Reeves, Calvin Smithson, and Captain James Wood.

Those who are known to have died while on duty in the war with Mexico were Moses C. Cummings, Edmundson Elkins, J. B. Mullens, Joshua Neely, J. H. Sullins, and James Young.

The Civil War

In February of 1861, Cannon County had voted 828 for and 1038 against a convention to form a separate government from the United States, as did most of the rest of the counties of Tennessee. But by June it had changed its mind and voted overwhelmingly for seccession—1149 for and 127 against.

Aids in crystallizing the county's sentiment for secession between February and June were probably the guns at Fort Sumter, in spite of the fact that it had been Southern guns that fired first, Lincoln's call for 75,000 volunteers to force the seceding states back into the Union, and Governor Isham G. Harris's campaign to lead the state into secession whether it wanted to go or not. Slavery itself could not have had much to do with it, since there were only 203 slaveholders (owning 974 slaves) out of a population of 9509.

Cannon County responded immediately to the Southern call to arms. According to Brown's *History,* seven infantry companies were soon raised under the commands of Captains Richmond Rushing, H. J. St. John, Gran Wood, Timothy Allison, M. M. Brien, Jr., James H. Wood, and John C. New. Two cavalry companies were formed under Captains H. A. Wiley and J. W.

Nichols. In the autumn of 1861, a regiment of Tennessee Volunteer Infantry was organized at Camp Smartt near McMinnville, with Colonel Benjamin Hill commanding. Cannon County furnished volunteers for this regiment. In all, the county furnished over 1000 soldiers to the Confederacy.

No battles were fought on Cannon County soil. Military activity was confined to skirmishes and to reconnaissance movements between the opposing sides. After the Battle of Murfreesboro (December 31, 1862-January 2, 1863) and Bragg's retreat to Tullahoma, roads through Cannon and Dekalb counties became vital to the safety of the Confederate army. Consequently, Morgan's Cavalry Brigade was given the responsibility of protecting the Confederate right flank from the Coffee County line to Wayne County, Kentucky, a distance of over 100 miles. Morgan concentrated his forces in Kentucky and at two points south of the Cumberland River, one at Liberty and one at Woodbury, directly across the two routes the Federals would have to take to get behind Bragg's right. Morgan made his headquarters at McMinnville, within easy reach of both points.

Several skirmishes were fought along these routes in the winter and spring of 1863. In January, the Federals made two reconnaissances to Auburn, on the 21st and 22nd and on the 25th. On February 3-5, they sent out an expedition from Murfreesboro to Auburn. On February 19, an intense skirmish was fought on the road between Auburn and a small hill west of Milton.

Morgan's forces at Liberty numbered about 600. Scouts reported the Federals, numbering 2000 to 4000 and one section of artillery, were advancing on Liberty. Morgan's cavalry, under Colonel Breckinridge, met them on the Auburn road. The Federals withdrew to Auburn in the night, and Morgan, who had dashed from McMinnville, planned to attack them there the next day.

Going through Auburn, he met wounded men and horses passing to the rear, and women and children in the streets cheered him on. He faced the fleeing Federals directly on the Rutherford-Cannon County line, one mile east of Milton.

There, they fought fiercely, but the Federals withdrew again to Vaught's Hill, one mile west of Milton, and hid themselves and their artillery behind rocks in a cedar glade. Morgan reported he was about to capture the Federal force when he ran out of ammunition and had to withdraw. His losses were heavy, several officers and many men. Morgan himself had a close call. His clothing was ripped with balls.

Basil Duke, in *Morgan's Cavalry,* cites what he calls an example of heroic but useless courage that so often characterized Morgan's officers. At one point, the Union fire was so intense that Lieutenant Colonel Martin's regiment fell back. But Colonel Martin stood his ground until he was left alone on the field, with the Federals effectively hidden in the cedar glade and behind rocks and firing away. At a slow walk, he "rode to the pike, and with his hat off rode slowly out of the fire. He was splendidly mounted, wore in his hat a large dark plume, with himself a large and striking figure, and I have often thought that it was the handsomest picture of cool and desperate courage I saw in the war." Indeed, this kind of heroism afflicted the Confederacy throughout the war—like General Albert Sidney Johnston at Shiloh, who sat stoically erect on his horse while he bled to death.

Four skirmishes were fought at Readyville: one on June 7, 1862; October 5, 1863; October 6, 1863; and September 6, 1864. In one of these fights, probably the one fought on October 5 and 6, the Union forces are said to have been positioned on Peake's Hill, while the Confederates, under Captain Nichols, occupied Talley Hill, immediately behind Charles Ready's mill. A mile of open ground lay between them, which served as a battle ground. After the Battle of Murfreesboro (or Stone's River), a Confederate brigade under the command of Colonel Hazen retreated to Readyville and made its headquarters at "The Corners," Charles Ready's house.

Four skirmishes were fought at Bradyville in 1863—one on February 16, one on March 1, one on March 25, and one on June 24. On March 26, 1863, the Federals sent a reconnaissance force from Murfreesboro to Bradyville.

After the Battle of Murfreesboro, skirmishes were fought at or near Woodbury on January 19, January 24, March 1, April 4, May 24, March 25, and September 10. An expeditionary force was sent out from Murfreesboro on March 3-8 and another from Readyville on April 2, 1863.

On Saturday afternoon, July 12, 1862, a patrolling party of General Crittenden's Union forces at Murfreesboro entered Woodbury, whose citizens were spending a quiet afternoon, and arrested many of the men of the town on the charge that the people there had given aid and comfort to the Rebels. Crittenden's ire had been aroused by the killing of five Union men near Lascassas, 20 miles away from Woodbury. For this, he is said to have threatened to hang 100 Rebels for every Union man killed. The Woodbury men were taken to Murfreesboro and jailed. Five prisoners held there were scheduled to be hanged at sunrise on Sunday morning.

The women of Woodbury were desperate, indeed, and late into Saturday night were crying in the streets. They had no hint that, by a happy circumstance, the best help they could have asked for was on the way.

On July 6, Forrest had left Chattanooga with 1000 men, headed for Middle Tennessee. He reached Beersheba Springs, on the western edge of the Cumberland Plateau, on July 11. There, he heard that General Buell, at Nashville, was planning to occupy McMinnville as a strategic point between Nashville and Chattanooga. For this purpose, General Crittenden had collected 1700 men at Murfreesboro. Forrest pushed on to McMinnville, where he rested a day and picked up 400 more men. On July 12, he reached Woodbury, arriving there at 11 o'clock on Saturday night. He was met by the women of the town, who assailed him with their cries for help. Forrest promised them he would rescue their men. Despair turned to hope, and the women brought out the dishes they had prepared for their families' Sunday dinners and fed Forrest and his men. Forrest rested an hour, tradition says, at Hill Top, the home of James Wood. At one o'clock, he left for Murfreesboro.

By another circumstance on that day, John Hunt Morgan

had captured a Union-held town in Kentucky. His jokester telegrapher Elsworth sent out a message on the captive telegraph wire for Union ears to hear that Forrest had just captured Murfreesboro. Forrest was a day late, but he was on his way. He arrived at Murfreesboro at 4:30 on Sunday morning, on his 41st birthday.

It was half an hour before reveille, and only the cooks were astir, preparing to get breakfast. To them, Forrest's approaching cavalry on the macadamized turnpike sounded like thunder. He struck before they were out of their beds. He stormed the jail, which a fleeing guard set on fire, but his men tore open the doors with axe and crowbars before the flames could engulf the prisoners. Among them were the five men to be hanged at sunrise.

At noon, Forrest sent Crittenden a terse note. "I must demand an unconditional surrender of your force," he said, "or I will have every man put to the sword. This demand is made to prevent the effusion of blood."

By six o'clock, the battle was over. The Union force surrendered, including General Crittenden and nearly 1200 men. Over $1,000,000 worth of supplies were captured or destroyed. In Nashville, General Buell ordered out a force under General Nelson to retake Murfreesboro and then McMinnville. Forrest promptly went behind Nelson and tore up railroad tracks and destroyed bridges. Military Governor Andrew Johnson thought Forrest intended to take Nashville.

Basil Duke describes the biggest military action at Woodbury during the war. It occurred on January 24, 1863, between Morgan's Second Kentucky Regiment, under the command of Lieutenant Hutchinson, and a detachment of Federals sent out from Murfreesboro. The regiment was much depleted, down to less than 400 men, and was ill equipped. The Federals numbered 3000. Hutchinson held the top of a low hill on the approach to Woodbury, protected by a rock fence. He had no guns with which to answer the Federal artillery, but he held his fire until the Union forces came within range. The fight lasted an hour, during which time the Federals took the fence, but lost it to

Hutchinson's forces. Colonel Hutchinson held a company of his men behind the lines to show themselves marching to impress the enemy with apparent numbers, but finally he had to give way. During the retreat, Hutchinson made a chivalric gesture, that practice of Southern officers of exposing themselves to enemy fire to encourage their men. At the conclusion of the retreat, he was "laughing gleefully" at his successful withdrawal when "a ball struck him in the temple and he fell dead from his horse. His officers threw his body upon his horse and carried it off under hot fire."

Hutchinson was 24 years old. A memorial stone stands near the spot where he fell, on the south side of U. S. Highway 70S. His body was buried in the graveyard behind the Brevard house in Edgefield, but it was later moved to his home in Springfield.

Not all Cannon County soldiers were in the Confederate armies. In July of 1862, Military Governor Andrew Johnson ordered Colonel William B. Stokes of DeKalb County to organize a regiment called the Fifth Tennessee Cavalry (sometimes known as the First Middle Tennessee Cavalry). Many Cannon Countians joined this regiment. How many joined is not known, but, in 1890, a quarter of a century after the Civil War was over, the census records showed that 137 veterans or their widows in the county were drawing pensions for services with the Union armies, nearly all of them in the Fifth Tennessee Cavalry. They were receiving their checks through such post offices as Auburn, Braxton, Talome, Hollow Springs, Burgen, Brysonville, Leoni, Mechanicsville, Prater, Woodbury, and Trousdale (just over the line in Warren County).

This is a pretty high number of Union veterans to be surviving in a county which, in June of 1861, had voted 1149 to 127 against staying in the Union. DeKalb County, being more Unionist to begin with (in June of 1861, it had voted 833 for and 642 against secession), furnished the bulk of Stokes's personnel.

Stokes's Fifth Tennessee Cavalry was formed primarily to keep order in Middle Tennessee. A part was based at Liberty. At first, it was an effective military organization. Units of it were

scattered very often, but the regiment or portions of it took part in the Battle of Murfreesboro, the Battle of Lookout Mountain, and the Battles of Chickamauga and Chattanooga. Parts of it were stationed for a time at Sparta to break up the guerrilla bands under Champ Ferguson, Hughes, and Bledsoe. The regiment was at the Battle of Nashville and is credited in Hale's *History of DeKalb County* with battling Bedford Forrest to a standstill on the Franklin Pike and driving him from the field at LaVergne.

But the Fifth Tennessee Cavalry came to be known as an inefficient fighting unit. It grew worse with time. By January of 1864, General Thomas, at Nashville, recommended that the regiment be broken up. In the same month, Major General Rousseau, at Nashville, reported that all troops in the District were well disciplined, well equipped, and in good condition "excepting, of course, the 5th Tennessee Cavalry under Colonel Stokes, and a few others, who are neither well drilled, disciplined, or equipped."

Colonel Stokes complained to Brigadier General Sooy Smith, Chief of Cavalry, that his men were in need of mounts and rifles. General Smith replied, "You have no idea of the demands made on our Government for horses to remount our Cavalry. No one Government—not all the Governments in the world—could keep so much cavalry mounted while animals are so recklessly destroyed . . . horses are absolutely out of the question. You must find and take them in the country you traverse . . . Now pitch in, Colonel, and help yourself to horses, keep your powder dry and give the guerrillas thunder wherever you can find them." Whether or not he gave the guerrillas thunder is a question, but this clear, officially condoned invitation to horse thievery would cause repercussions in some parts of the county that would last for decades after the war.

In 1864, Colonel Stokes was replaced by General Milroy. Soon, he was complaining: "I have tried every means known to me to bring about order and efficiency in the regiment, but have not been rewarded with any success . . . The field officers seem to have no conception of obligations and duties; have no

control over their subordinates or men. Officers and men absent themselves without authority whenever they take a notion to visit their homes. The regiment is about 800 strong, and the largest number that can be paraded in camp at any time will not exceed 200." He went on to recommend that the regiment be sent out of the state to get them away from home, but this was never done. It simply continued to disintegrate.

When the Civil War broke out, a Cannon County man with neutral sentiments might have thought that, among the intricate hills and hollows, he could ride out the war in comparative peace and safety. This might have been true if it had not been for the guerrilla warfare that infested the area throughout the war.

After the decline and almost complete disintegration of Stokes's Fifth Tennessee Cavalry, a new regiment was formed out of some of its fragments. Its base, too, was at Liberty. On September 1, 1864, when the war had only six months to run, Joe Blackburn, one of Stokes's captains and a native of Liberty, formed the Fourth Regiment of Mounted Infantry. William Hathaway, another of Stokes's officers and also a native of Liberty, was one of his most prominent captains. On November 26, Blackburn was appointed Lieutenant Colonel. He was 22 years old.

The regiment was used mainly to fight Confederate guerrillas in the counties of the upper Cumberland Valley. At the end of the war, Blackburn and a band of his men captured Champ Ferguson, the fiercest and most feared bushwhacker of them all, who claimed to be on the Confederate side. Goodspeed says that even Rebel sympathizers were relieved by his capture.

Born on November 13, 1847, at Mechanicsville on the north side of Mason-Burger Mountain, Hiram Taylor (Pomp) Kersey was less than 14 years old when the Civil War began. He joined Captain Lon Savage's company in Smithville. Jack Neely was born on Cavender's Branch. His family had founded Henpeck Mill. He joined Captain Wiley's company in Woodbury. Both of these men came home soon on what seemed to be permanent leave, saying they had been given secret permission by their captains to form a band of home guards to fight the Yankee

guerrillas. The fact seems to have been that neither side was a respecter of loyalties but ravaged at will and often without principle, although there have been, and may be now, people in Cannon and DeKalb Counties who would swear that one or the other of the two bands contained the most patriotic and courageous men that ever trod the soil.

Actually, one's family might have been safer in enemy territory where military discipline prevailed. Any male member of the family 15 years old and up to old age was pressured to "join up"—the right way, of course. Whether he joined or not, his family's possessions were likely taken, his land skimmed of horses, cattle, hogs, and chickens, his house stripped of quilts and coats and pants, not stolen, but taken right before the owner's eyes. Not soldiers, but guerrillas and then not even guerrillas but plain bushwhackers masquerading under the cloak of military respectability put the clothing on as they came out the door and headed for the scraggly band of men waiting at the gate. But before they joined the band, they toured the yard, breaking the iron washpot as they passed and shattering the grindstone.

He found, too, that coming home on leave was often as dangerous as facing the enemy's guns. There was a good chance he would hear a knock at the door in the night, and he would hide while a member of his family timidly answered it to lie and say he was not there. The men with their guns and knives barged in anyway, banging the door against the wall, and routed him out, wherever he was, and shot him on sight and maybe finished him off with a knife.

In spite of the murders and rapacities committed by these two bands against each other and others, they sometimes, almost by unspoken truce, attended the same dance given at a Dennis house on Cannell Creek, both Rebel and Yankee sympathizers and bushwhackers dancing together, in uniform and out, until daybreak. Beardless Pomp Kersey is said to have attended one of these dances dressed as a girl and to have danced with his arch enemy Will Hathaway, who was much taken with the supposed maiden's charm.

At such a dance in the early morning of July 23, 1864,

Pomp, apparently not attending this time, fired over the heads of the frolicsome dancers through an open door and started the pursuit by Blackburn's and Hathaway's band which trailed Pomp and his band by way of Sugar Tree Knob around the north side of Dick Taylor Mountain and on to Mechanicsville, their hideaway.

There, people will tell you, at the base of Mason-Burger Mountain, they met a small boy by the name of Pete Trail carrying a cloth-covered basket on the crook of his arm. "Where have you been?" "To carry Uncle Pomp and Mr. Neely something to eat," he said in his innocence. Hathaway and Blackburn found them asleep and killed them everyone. They loaded their bodies like logs on Kersey ox carts and hauled them, with arms and legs dangling, to Liberty, where they put them on display on a platform. This was on July 24, 1864. Later, the bodies were brought from Liberty. Pomp was buried in the Melton Cemetery at Mechanicsville.

When the war ended, the men who had survived the battlefields and the diseases returned to their bare fields and vacant pastures and their houses run down with four years of neglect and willful destruction. If they were lucky, they would be riding or leading a starved and broken-down mule or horse. At least, they would be carrying a gun, which now would draw blood only from the rabbits and squirrels they shot to feed their lean families.

But not all. Christopher Columbus Brown, coming home from long and arduous service in the Southwest and crossing the Tennessee River at Muscle Shoals, threw his weapon into the yellow torrent and vowed never to shoot a gun again. And he never did, though he lived for forty more years.

World Wars I and II

Cannon County, like all other counties, sent many of its citizens to fight in World Wars I and II. Twenty-two of them died in World War I. Thirty-five died in World War II.

Those who lost their lives in World War I were Samuel Bailey, Cherry M. Barrett, Clay Bucey, Eath Bush, Malcolm Cooper, Colonel Deberry, Houston Dobbs, Burley Elrod, John

W. Fugitte, Hugh Wiley Gunter, John Earl Hancock, Albert Higgins, Calvin Higgins, Mathew D. Keaton, Oral King, Drennon Merritt, Jesse Miller, Floyd E. Mooneyham, Robert W. Nichols, Willie Lee Owens, John M. Starr, and Grover C. Todd.

Those who lost their lives in World War II were Alf Barrett, Georgia D. Bell, James W. Borren, John Bowen, William E. Davenport, Earon F. Duke, Florst E. Ferrell, James C. Ferrell, Donald Francis, Warren Grim, Parmer R. Gunter, Wilbur Hayes, Medford Howse, Willis W. Jernigan, Ray Mabe, Avent Muncy, Charles Muncy, Troy Murphy, Lessie L. Nokes, Hoyte Parker, Adam G. Pelham, Robert D. Pendleton, Lloyd Perry, Cecil R. Reed, Howard M. Rogers, Horace F. St. John, Leonard Simmons, Estyl Smithson, Truman L. Thomas, Milburn Travis, Walker Lee Vandygriff, John H. Vinson, Tillman Willard, Fred Wooten, Jr., and James Harvey Young.

A memorial has been set up to these dead of World Wars I and II in the courthouse yard in Woodbury.

During World War II, the county was host to the Second Army staging war maneuvers. The topography of the county was peculiarly suited for the army's needs in reconnoitering and staging mock battles. In the remotest hollows, friendly contacts were made daily between the people of the county and the army personnel. It was not unusual for a tired soldier to ask for a glass of buttermilk from the cool spring and a piece of cornbread and sit and talk for a brief moment in the shade. In Woodbury, the citizens set up a USO center for the refreshment of the soldiers.

Religion

Religion is a strong force in Cannon County and has always been so. Civic and community meetings customarily open with a devotion or prayer. Dining tables are blessed. There may be little reading matter in the home, except the Bible. "I've read the Bible through three times," one may say, "and I'm starting to do it again." Attitudes toward one's religion and work are closely entwined. A farmer comes in from the fields and his wife from her housework or the garden and they go to church

and sing with vigor and conviction a song called "Work for the Night Is Coming."

Today, there are around 50 churches in the county. Others, not appearing on any map now, have served their day and disappeared completely. The strongest denominations today are the Church of Christ, with 23 congregations, the Baptists, with ten, and the Methodists, with seven. Other churches are Presbyterian, Holiness (Church of God), Seventh-Day Adventist, Jehovah's Witnesses, and Nazarene.

The Baptists

The Baptists were the first to become active in the county. On the fifth Sunday in July of 1808, Elder Joshua Lester and deacons Peter Pool, James Cross, P. Collins, and a Mr. Warren established a church on Brawley's Fork, in the southwestern part of the county. It was an offspring of Smith Fork at Statesville.

The church was strong until 1827, when a division occurred in the congregation, resulting in the formation of a Separate Baptist church built two miles south of Bradyville and called Hopewell, or Welles. Soon, this church split, when part of it went all the way over to a rising sect called Christian. Soon, this church, too, would split into the Christian Church, which favored instrumental music in its services, and the Church of Christ, which did not. The Church of Christ came to prevail in the county, as it did in most of the rest of Tennessee. Both the Christian Church and the Church of Christ were referred to, not wholly without derision, by the Baptists and others as Campbellites, after the religious reformer Alexander Campbell, who, with his father, started the church in 1809.

After the split, the Brawley's Fork Baptist Church remained weak until 1844, when it was revived by an indefatigable minister named Joseph Marion Dixon Cates. In 1847, Joshua Barton deeded two acres of land, which included "meetinghouse, camps and shelter," at what came to be known as Cateston to trustees John Hollis and James Robard Taylor, with the proviso that if a majority should go to another faith (Campbellite) the land would remain with the minority. The church building at

Cateston burned in 1893, and services were continued in a nearby schoolhouse. The church experienced a great revival in 1907 and, invigorated, built a new meetinghouse at Burt. In 1908, the name was changed to Burt Baptist Church. This building served until 1946, when it was torn down and a new building erected at another location in the community.

In 1812, East Fork Stone's River Baptist Church was established at a bend in Stone's River at the present site of Woodbury. This church apparently ran into difficulties, since it is recorded as being formed again in 1823 and still again in 1844. In 1823, the church started with 17 members. In 1834, the church was officially dissolved by Elders Joshua Lester, Gideon Rucker, and John P. Walker. Ten years later, it was reorganized under the leadership of J. M. D. Cates, with seven members, two men and three women. J. H. Grime, in his *History of Middle Tennessee Baptists,* says that Woodbury was "ever a difficult field." Since his time, however, the field has improved. At present, this church has 450 members.

The Auburn Baptist Church was founded in 1822, with 94 members, mainly through the efforts of John Fite, aided by Elders Cantrel Bethel, William Dale, Presley Lester, John Whitlock, and Joshua Lester. The church took the name of Saunder's Fork but was known locally as Poplar Stand. In 1827, the church became divided into United Baptists and Separate Baptists. Soon, some of the Separate Baptists went over to Campbellism. The remaining Separate Baptists and the United Baptists settled their differences in 1842 and reunited. In 1869, the name of the church was changed from Saunder's Fork to Auburn, which it still uses. In the 1950s, the congregation built a new meetinghouse. Present membership is 279.

Shiloh Baptist Church is on Saunder's Fork, four miles southeast of Auburntown. It was organized in 1862 by J. M. D. Cates, with 22 members. In 1878, the congregation built a new church house, but by 1900 dissension among its members had so weakened the church that it became almost wholly disorganized. The house burned in the early 1930s, and a new building was finished in 1936. Membership today is 229.

Saunder's Fork Baptist Church is located near Shiloh Baptist Church. It was established in 1847, with 13 members. It is known as Primitive Baptist, anti-mission and footwashing. The first building was frame. It was replaced in 1939. A brick building was erected in 1973. Membership is 156.

Sycamore Baptist Church is situated near the DeKalb-Cannon County line, at the mouth of Sycamore Creek. It was established in 1871 by Elder Bass in a log building, with 33 members. By 1900, it had over 400 members. A new house was built in 1895. It is still in use but has been modernized. J. H. Grime called this a remarkable church, a great place for gatherings. Membership is 229.

Mt. Pleasant Baptist Church was located near where the road from Woodbury crosses Dividing Ridge to Gassaway. It was established in 1874 by Henry Bass, from Sycamore. The church no longer exists.

Center Hill Baptist Church began meeting in a brush arbor in 1927, with eight members. L. R. Bell gave a plot of ground for a church building. Willie Jenkins was the first pastor. It now has a modern brick building.

Pleasant View Baptist Church is on the Highland Rim between U. S. Highway 70S and Ivy Bluff. It was organized in 1935, with 37 members. Land was given by Dewitt Smith and L. B. Sparkman. The first pastor was R. H. Hale. It has 75 members.

Dillon Street Baptist Church began in 1951 at Sheybogan, with seven members. In 1955, the congregation bought the old county garage on Dillon Street in Woodbury and converted it into the present church building.

Plainview Baptist Church was established at Sheybogan in 1957, with six members. It met first in an old building formerly used by the Amity Presbyterian Church. Leburn Rich was the first pastor. In 1958, a new church building was dedicated and named Plainview. It has 65 members.

At first, the Baptist churches in the county were ultra-Calvinistic, believing that all men sinned when Adam fell and the human race is therefore damned, except for those to whom

God chooses to extend his grace and to elect for salvation. These elections are predestined, and nothing the individual can do will alter this plan. The trouble began in the Baptist churches, when Elder Reuben Ross began to doubt this doctrine and searched the Scriptures diligently to resolve his doubts. He concluded that the human will is free and salvation is within the reach of all, the only requirements being love, faith, repentance, and the pursuit of Christ.

Elder Ross first preached this doctrine in a funeral sermon at Port Royal, Tennessee, in 1817, and thereby shook the Baptist world in Middle Tennessee. One result was a schism in the churches at Brawley's Fork and Poplar Stand in Cannon County. After that, the Christian Church (and later Church of Christ) found fertile ground for its Arminian doctrine.

Methodists

Up to 1812, the area now included in Cannon County was covered by the Goose Creek Circuits, which spread over most of the country now known as Davidson, Williamson, Rutherford, Wilson, Smith, DeKalb, and Cannon counties. In 1812, the area was placed under the Stone's River and Caney Fork Circuits. In 1820 or 1821, John B. McFerrin heard Jedidiah McMinn preach at a camp meeting at Prospect on Hill Creek. According to Brown's *History*, William Bates gave land in 1847 for a church building at Prospect. It was still standing in 1936 but has since disappeared.

Shady Grove was a well-known Methodist camp meeting ground in the early 1800s. The site of this ground, now in Coffee County, was close to the present southern limits of Cannon County, near Ivy Bluff.

Short Mountain, at Half Acre, was also popular as a camp meeting ground in the early 1800s. This place was strategically located between Stone's River Valley and Caney Fork Valley, affording a convenient spot and landmark for people of both areas.

On October 7, 1833, John Kelley, of the Caney Fork Circuit, wrote: "Our first camp meeting commenced at Short Mountain on the 12 of July, closing the 17th. . . . Many were the cries for

mercy. Forty professed to experience the regeneration of their hearts. . . . The slain of the Lord were many."

On October 28, 1833, F. E. Pitts wrote from Gallatin: "The work has extended through all ranks . . . spreading through every neighborhood, ten miles square, from Mill Creek to the top of Cumberland Mountain, and from the Kentucky line to Elk River in the South." Meetings were held at Short Mountain, Mt. Pleasant, and Saunder's Chapel in Cannon County. A camp meeting was also held at Shady Grove. Fifty-five persons were converted at Short Mountain, 65 at Mt. Pleasant, 58 at Saunder's Chapel, and 85 at Shady Grove.

On August 15, 1839, a camp meeting was reported from Short Mountain by Thomas Smith. "This is the name of a most beautiful Camp Ground," he said. The meeting "commenced Feb. 9 and continued through the following Wednesday," and "the best of feeling prevailed among the people. We had no excitement save on the all absorbing subject of the salvation of souls." There were 90 converts from "all classes and grades of society, from the humblest poor, to the richest planter." Perhaps Thomas Smith, in the last sentence of his report, was refuting the charge that Methodism's appeal was restricted to the lower ranks of society.

On November 18, 1840, S. S. Moody announced a quarterly meeting to be held at Woodbury, on Short Mountain Circuit, for January 9 and 10. In September of 1841, Thomas D. Harwell held a quarterly meeting at Prospect, where a "glorious time" was had. One hundred and twenty persons were converted. Methodism has declined at Short Mountain since the early days. The strongest church in the county today is at Ivy Bluff.

Center Hill United Methodist Church is located on the Highland Rim between Highway 70S and Short Mountain. It was organized in 1962. Sterling Logel was the first pastor. Present membership is 26.

The first Gilley Hill Methodist Church was a log house built in 1868, at the present site of Gilley Hill Cemetery in the southern part of the county. Its "cornerstone" was laid by the Gilley

brothers, Evans, Cecil, and Luster. This building burned. A second church house was built about 1910 or 1912. It was used until 1938, when the present building was erected. Several people gave 30 days of work on the building. It is one of the few churches in the county to hold an Easter sunrise service every year.

The Ivy Bluff Methodist Church was organized in 1899. It was first a Methodist Episcopal Church South with 16 members. Joint services of Baptists and Methodists were held in the Baptist Church building until the Methodist building could be finished in 1905. The membership was 25. The Methodists and Baptists continued to hold services in the same building but with separate Sunday schools.

On the first Sunday in May, the preaching was done by both Baptist and Methodist ministers. After the preaching they had communion and then dinner on the ground. In the afternoon, they had a singing. The first Sunday in May is now Homecoming Day for the church. A new brick building was erected in 1948. The church has had a strong congregation for 80 years.

New Short Mountain Methodist Church was organized in 1953, when three weak Methodist churches in the vicinity of Short Mountain were consolidated—Osment Chapel, Tucker's Chapel, and Old Short Mountain.

Osment Chapel was located two miles south of the Gap of the Mountain on the Highland Rim. It was organized in 1874. Its first building was log. William Milton Osment donated the land and the logs. This building was used until 1905, when it was condemned. A new building was erected in 1920-1923 but it burned sometime in the 1940s.

Tucker's Chapel was located at Cross Roads, at the east end of the eastern spur of Short Mountain, on the Highland Rim. It was organized in 1888-1890. The building was severely damaged by a windstorm in the 1940s.

Old Short Mountain Church had its beginning in the early 1800s with the camp meetings held at the present site of Half Acre (the vanished village of Mechanicsville). It was organized about 1815. Fifty-two wooden tents formed a square around

the camp grounds. Camp meetings were held every September and were attended by people from many towns and counties. By the Grant Act of 1823, the church received four acres of land on the old camp grounds. In the 1825 minutes, it was called Mountain Church.

John Nichols was pastor of this church during the Civil War. A story goes that he was warned by the leader of a bushwhacker band, Will Hathaway, not to preach the following Sunday or he would be killed. Nichols was in the pulpit when Hathaway came in and took a seat in the back and placed his gun across his lap. Nichols delivered his sermon with such fervor that several of the women rose from their benches and began shouting. In the confusion, Nichols slipped away unnoticed. "He didn't understand the sword of the spirit," Mary Reams, Mountain Church Historian, said. In 1954, the church had 12 members.

In August of 1953, the three churches were combined, and a new building was erected at the Gap of the Mountain, called New Short Mountain Church. It has 97 members. Lately, some of the Old Short Mountain congregation have returned to the Old Short Mountain building at Half Acre.

The Woodbury Methodist Church was organized about 1820, in an old log cabin where the church now stands. The log cabin was followed by a large frame structure, which was later moved to College Street, where the high school recently stood, and used as a dormitory by the Baptist Female College. This building burned.

In 1845, a brick building was erected in place of the old frame building which had been moved. It was rebuilt soon after 1900, leaving off the belfry. In 1935, the bell from the old belfry was given to the county for the new courthouse clock.

By 1929, the church was a pitiful decline, as James Cox, the minister, told the story. The building was in disrepair. The Sunday school had died. On a Sunday morning in the fall, the new preacher and his wife arrived at the cold, clammy, dirty building with no fires in the stoves. Nobody else arrived until nearly 11, when eight people drifted in.

Meanwhile, the new pastor had built fires in the two stoves.

Mrs. Presley Lester came in and said, "Oh, Mr. Cox, you can't build a fire in that stove. The flue is stopped up." James rushed out to get water to put out the fire. A cloud of steam, fire, smoke, and ashes billowed into the room. By 11 o'clock, 14 other people (Methodist, Baptist, Presbyterian, Church of Christ) swelled the congregation to 23. With smoke still coming from the east stove, the pastor led two songs, read a Scripture, and offered a prayer. When he spoke the first sentence, the stove pipe on the west stove collapsed. More fire, soot, and smoke shot into the room. Men ran for water to put out the fire. Then, Lee McCrary, Presbyterian, invited the congregation to move to his church around the corner. Two weeks later, the stock market crashed, but the church was on its way to rejuvenation. The congregation increased, and in 1952 the building was thoroughly remodeled.

Rocky Point Methodist Church was located on a rocky knoll where Duck Branch empties into Carson Fork. It is not known when the church was organized, but a deed dated 1845 was given by James Sissom. Church rolls before 1843 have been lost. One building was blown down in 1917. It was rebuilt but was sold, along with the grounds, in the 1930s. In the 1920s, the pastor of the Woodbury Methodist Church tried to keep the church alive by going into the woods and helping make boards for the roof, to no avail. The church has vanished.

Simmons Chapel Methodist Church is located on Hollow Springs Road, in the extreme southern part of the county. It was organized in 1906 by the Reverend Hardy Simmons, who "opened the doors of the church [in an old schoolhouse] and received eight members." Mr. and Mrs. Riley Simmons gave ground for the building and parsonage. In 1977, the building was torn down and a larger one built.

The Church of Christ

The Church of Christ, first known as the Christian Church and by its detractors as the Campbellite Church, was in the area of Cannon County by 1830 or earlier. In 1830, according to Brown's *History,* Tolbert Fanning baptised Elizabeth Gowen, wife of Dr. W. D. Gowen. In 1832, the *Millennial Harbinger* re-

ported that a meeting was held at Readyville, which brought ten accessions to the church. By 1844, a comparatively strong congregation had grown up near Woodbury. J. J. Trott wrote in the *Christian Review* that "Brethren Hooker, Curlee, White, and myself held a protracted meeting near Woodbury. . . . Twenty-six were baptised during the meeting." The church was established in the fall of 1843, with 60 members, but an attempt had been made to establish a church there previously. A meetinghouse had been built there "years ago for Brother Travis to preach in," Trott said. The location of this church was on Stone's River, one and one-half miles east of Woodbury.

On August 14, 1845, J. J. Trott wrote that he and S. E. Jones had visited Woodbury, where 160 persons were added to the church. He added that "Bros. Hall, Curlee, Callahan aided part of the time" in the services and that the "congregation promises well." S. E. Jones wrote on September 14 of the same year that he and his colleague, J. J. Trott, had had 50 accessions at Woodbury, 23 at Brawley's Fork, and one at Poplar Stand.

The year 1845 seems to have been a banner year for the Church of Christ in Cannon County. Another letter to the *Christian Review* reported, with possible duplications, that "in Sept., with Brethren Murphy, J. Spear and Son, 23 were added at Brawley's Fork, Cannon County, and two reclaimed. At Woodbury, with Brethren Hall, Curlee, Murphy and White, 40 were added, making 200 at two meetings at that point."

In 1850, Calvin Curlee "converted thirty-one persons in Cannon." In the same year, "Brother Jones and others held a meeting at Brawley's Fork which resulted in the conversion of 28 persons."

Soon after 1825, the Baptists and the Christians were in direct conflict. The Campbellites were having wide appeal, not only luring members away from the various churches, but their preachers as well. There were several reasons for this.

Among them, the political and philosophical climate of the time encouraged individualism and selftrust. Up in New England, the devout Ralph Waldo Emerson had felt this force so strongly that he became aligned with no church or sect at all.

In the Southeast, especially in Tennessee and Kentucky, the rise of Campbellism paralleled the rise of Jacksonian democracy, with its new surge of emphasis on the ordinary individual and his wisdom and judgment. The frontiersman's preoccupation with his independence had already resulted in a schism within the Baptist church, and it was an easy step from Separatism to Campbellism, where there was not just a setting up of a new association or conference or synod, but none at all. Mostly, it was time to rebel against the rigid tenets of Calvinism, especially the doctrine of the total depravity of man and election, and acceptance of the doctrine of Arminianism, a belief that man is wholly a free-will agent and the salvation of his soul lies within his own ability to accept Christ.

The Campbellites were extremely congregational and acknowledged no authority beyond the Bible and the wishes of the individual congregation. "Speak where the Bible speaks," they said. "Be silent where the Bible is silent." They kept no records except those they chose to keep and made no reports except to their own congregation, a fact which makes it difficult to obtain documented information about individual churches in the county.

Later, David Lipscomb College in Nashville and Bethany College in West Virginia undertook the education of the preachers of the Church of Christ and the Christian Church. David Lipscomb College superintended the publication of much of the Sunday school literature and Bible commentary for the Church of Christ, most of it written at first by David Lipscomb himself and E. A. Elam. So it might be argued that the Church of Christ came to accept a quasi-centralized authority, like the Baptists and Methodists and others.

Congregations multiplied over the county until the Church of Christ equaled and surpassed the strongly entrenched Baptists and Methodists. The sect (a term which the Church of Christ rejects, as it does the term *denomination*) grew to have such wide acceptance in the county that use of the same building for Church of Christ services and public school was almost universal, the school discontinuing classes during services in

protracted meetings and reverting to school work when the sermon was over. This interruption of school work for religious services aroused no objections by Cannon County citizens, or by the officials of the schools, or even the schools themselves, which, after the sermon was over, might go right back to praising the wisdom of the Founding Fathers for requiring the separation of church and state.

In 1827, the Baptists were losing some of their best ministers to the Campbellites, through the Separate Baptists—for example, Calvin Curlee and Elisha Bell of Brawley's Fork, John Whitlock of Smith Fork, and William J. Bomer of New Hope. "Having started on their Arminian career," wrote J. H. Grime, "they could not be satisfied with this result, and five out of six have now launched head long into Campbellism. . . . From that time on, this territory has been a battle ground between Baptists and Campbellites."

On July 19, 1845, J. M. D. Cates wrote in the *Baptist* that "on Monday of our meeting, whilst brother John Bond was preaching the unsearchable riches of Christ, and all was peace and good feeling, and a prospect of a precious meeting, the enemy of God and man influenced a pious Campbellite to arise in the congregation and greatly disturb both speaker and hearers."

In 1874, Henry Bass, a Baptist preacher from Sycamore, began preaching in the newly organized church at Mt. Pleasant, now Pleasant Ridge. He was immediately harassed by the Campbellites. J. H. Grime describes one episode:

> This [Mt. Pleasant] was a very wicked community, but had been preoccupied by the Campbellites. The persecution against the Baptists at the beginning was very fierce. . . . Soon after he began preaching there, one Saturday on arriving at the school house where he was to preach, nearby he discovered a gallows erected, with a notice in writing that if he did not leave the community and cease to preach his Baptist doctrine he would be hanged upon it. He went into the house and preached. At the close of the service he announced his hanging, stating that they would find him about his Master's business.

The Church of Christ afforded strong competition for other denominations in the county as well. "I have had the pleasure," said J. J. Trott in the *Christian Review,* "of witnessing the power of the Gospel in the destruction of sectarianism and conversion of sinners." He proceeds to tell of a meeting held in Cannon County with three other preachers. Among the converts were "one intelligent Catholic lady, one intelligent Episcopalian gentleman, one respectable Presbyterian gentleman, one poius Methodist lady, and one Baptist gentleman." They were all "persuaded to abandon the traditions of their fathers." He states later that "some 20 of the Methodists confessed the Lord's authority. Three were added from the Baptists and one from the Presbyterians."

Preachers of the Church of Christ are not ordained. Some of them are trained in church schools like David Lipscomb College, but many are not. One who feels a call to preach and can find an audience is welcome to do so, and he may become popular and influential. He fills the need for short-term preachers, since many congregations are unable to employ a preacher for more than a week or two each year.

Since baptism by immersion is a cardinal point in the doctrine of the Church of Christ and since none of the churches had a baptistry until about 1940, streams of water that afforded pools of adequate depth were used. Sometimes churches like Pleasant Ridge and Sugar Tree Knob had to go some miles to Stone's River to find suitable places for baptism. Some of them still do. Baptismal ceremonies were usually held in the afternoon in time for converts and others in the ceremony to reach the church for night services. Memories of those times are as fresh as today's thoughts:

On arriving at church, the women immediately go inside and sit on the left side and talk and fan themselves with the funeral home cardboard fans. The men stay outside and smoke their pipes and roll-your-owns and whittle and talk until the song leader starts the first song. Then, they dribble in, sitting on the right side of the aisle. Half way back, however, the con-

gregation is sexually integrated, the boys and girls sitting together, if they are "going together." If so, boys take their girls to church, and "going with a girl" two or three times lets others know that she's your girl.

The kerosene lamps, with their milk-white shades, glow dimly from the ceiling of the unpainted, nut-brown room, aided by lamps with mirrorlike reflectors hanging on the walls. An unshaded lamp sits on a pedestal on the preacher's right and left. In the daytime the pedestals hold vases of flowers—zinnias, marigolds, or whatever is blooming now. At night the hard-shelled bugs and candleflies flutter and bang against the lamps and on the walls and fall down to the floor. The windows and doors are open in the heat of summer (there are no screens), and the pleasant smell of mint, foot-crushed at the spring, fills the air.

The proud youth sits with his girl on the gloriously crowded bench. While the preacher speaks of things of the spirit, his mind is on things of the flesh, for in the sanctified atmosphere of the church there can be no sin. Meanwhile his rival (his girl's beau a summer ago) is busy down under the hedgeapple trees cutting up his brand new set of buggy harness.

The preacher closes his Bible with the bright red string and steps down from the pulpit. The song leader strikes the edge of his songbook with the tuning fork and sounds *do me sol,* and the congregation begins singing *a cappella* again, this time the invitation song—the silver tenors, the mellow altos, and the brassy baritones and basses ringing out on the night air. "O why not tonight?" "Tomorrow's sun may never rise." Reaching the point of conversion, the boy goes nervously up the aisle, and gives the preacher his hand, and the preacher puts his hand on the boy's shoulder and sets him down to await the saving of other souls and the ending of the song. Then he calls for a repeat of the last verse and chorus just to make sure no sinner on the borderline is left unsaved. Then he puts his hand in the air and asks the benediction.

Tomorrow—the baptism in the river, the horses and wagons and buggies and automobiles arriving late in the afternoon, and

the people standing on the bank and singing "Shall we gather at the river?" The preachers leads the boy into the dusty green water and raises his left hand with the white handkerchief in it, while his right hand rests firmly on the base of the young man's neck, speaking a short prayer while curious minnows nibble at the boy's naked ankles. Then the preacher pushes him backward, and down, with his hand and handkerchief over the boy's nose and mouth, his feet floating upward and weightless as his head goes under. Then the preacher lifts him up, and it is finished (all the time the never-far-distant snake hiding under the sycamore root where it had slipped from the willow branch when the first celebrant arrived). Then the boy goes out of the water and climbs the bank, his shirt and trousers clinging to his body like another skin.

Today, there are 23 Churches of Christ in the county. Usually, one is considered a member of not just one particular congregation but the whole body of the Church of Christ, if he "joins the church," is baptised by immersion, attends services somewhere and takes communion.

The Bethlehem Church of Christ was established during the Civil War, when interested persons started meeting in homes on Horse Springs Branch of Carson Fork. The group expanded and secured the use of a log schoolhouse. Hugh Craft was the first preacher. A building was erected in 1894. It is still in use. Jesse Sewell preached there soon after the Civil War. Membership now is about 30.

Church of Christ meetings in Bradyville began in 1822. Later, a building was constructed by Jesse Jernigan on land given by a Mrs. Patton. The logs for the building were given by Curley Curlee. In the early 1900s, Mrs. Dave Patton gave a bell for the steeple. The building was remodeled around 1880, leaving three of the original oil lamps on the walls.

Crisp, or Browntown, Church of Christ was established in 1922 by descendants of slaves on the Brown family plantation. It was first located on Logan Crisp's place, in the extreme southeastern corner of the county. The first preachers were Jim

Macon and Sam King. The church was moved a short distance, where it is now.

The Curlee Church of Christ is located just off the road from Highway 70S to Bradyville. It was started soon after Calvin Curlee went over from Brawley's Fork Baptist Church to Campbellism, around 1820. In the King James rhythms of Bertha Knox, aged 94:

> All the land around the church belonged to Joseph Knox. He built, lived, and died in the house that Luke Knox tore down. And at his death his land was all sold. Calvin Curlee bought the farm north of the church. He gave the land that the road cut off from his farm for the church, and he began to teach Sunday school in the old schoolhouse.
>
> They decided to build a log house and it was small, and my grandfather said they wanted Calvin Curlee to preach the first sermon, as he gave the ground. They had Calvin Curlee stand on the south side of that big oak tree that stood just inside of what is now the cemetery, and the crowd stood over the cemetery. Then the first sermon was preached. But the log house didn't stand long until it burned, and they all went back to the old school house.
>
> That big April storm came in 1877 and blew all the timber down. My daddy and Uncle Roy hauled every log to the mill, and they hauled every plank that went into the big room of the church.
>
> Uncle Bob Knox took a big hand in the church. I can't remember of ever being there that Uncle Bob didn't read and make a talk. When Uncle Bob died, Steve Knox took his daddy's place, and Steve had the big oak tree cut because it had gotten dangerous and it was just a shell.
>
> There was a good old Negro who lived across the road and up the side of the hill. He belonged there. I was never there when Uncle Charley wasn't there. I reckon he had the keys to the church. He opened up the church every Sunday morning, went to the spring, brought a bucket of water and got ready to help hitch the horses. But when the church begun he came in and took the front seat on the south side of the church house, and that corner was full of Negroes, but the church was called the Christian church. And about that time it was divided and it was called the Church of Christ and the ones that wanted mu-

> sic in the church was called the Christian church. When Mr. Gaither died, Claud took his place, and Comer Hollis took Steve Knox's place and I think Adam Harris took Comer's place.

Elkins Church of Christ is located on U. S. Highway 70S, two miles east of Woodbury. The congregation was started by John N. Elkins and his sons Richard and Milo. The first building was erected in 1899. The land for the building was given by George Northcutt and Jim Mears. Later, Bill Milligan gave land for a parking lot and a cemetery. A new building was erected in 1974.

Iconium Church of Christ is located on the Highland Rim at the head of Hill Creek. It was started in the late 1800s and called Woods Church, for Ben Woods, its first preacher. In 1964, the old building burned, and a new one was constructed in the same year. Current attendance is 116.

McMahan Church of Christ started about 1915 in a one-room schoolhouse where the present church house stands. In 1922, the McMahan School was consolidated with Geedville, and the church continued to use the building. In 1934, the congregation bought the school building for $20, tore it down, and built a new meetinghouse. In 1954, this building was torn down and a new one built. Present membership is about 100.

Midway Church of Christ is located 12 miles south of Woodbury on Highway 53, Jim Cummings Highway. The first meetings were held in a tent in the summer of 1947 by a young preacher named Billy Nicks. Cecil Smith gave the land for the building, which was completed in 1949. The church started with 50 members. It now has 150.

Mt. Ararat (pronounced A'rat) Church of Christ was started in 1933. Will Shean gave the land.

New Hope Church of Christ was established in 1852. It first assembled at Culpepper, at the mouth of Locke Creek, and met there for 37 years. A new building was erected one mile west at its present location. Jesse Sewell was a great aid in building up the congregation in the last half of the 1800s. It has a full-time minister and one of the strongest congregations in the county.

Pleasant View Church of Christ is located on the Highland Rim, between Highway 70S and Ivy Bluff. It dates from about 1904, when a schoolhouse was erected there. In 1960, the congregation erected a building of its own, which is still in use.

Red Hill Church of Christ is located on the Highland Rim. It was established about 1910, on land donated by David Akers Smithson. The building is still in use, though much remodeled.

Smith Grove Church of Christ is located at Sheybogan and called Mooretown Church of Christ. James N. Smith and his wife Mary bought land for the church in 1929. They also bought an old schoolhouse, which they moved on logs to the grounds where it stood until 1974. When James Smith died, the name of the church was changed from Mooretown to Smith's Grove. In 1974, the congregation held its first service in its new building. It has 150 members.

Sugar Tree Knob Church of Christ is located on the ridge between the west spur of Short Mountain and the crest of Sugar Tree Knob. There is no written record of the church until about 1920, though it was there long before that—some think as early as 1824. It now has a modern frame building in a picturesque setting and is well attended.

Sunny Slope Church of Christ was formerly known as Berea, located a mile up Hollis Creek from its present site. Its earliest records are dated 1879. There was a school at Berea in the same building. Downstream, there was another school, called Smith. For a few years, church services were also held there. Before 1920, the schools were consolidated equidistant between the two and called Sunny Slope. In 1921, the Berea Church was also moved and located across the road from the new school. In 1976, the building was torn down and a new one constructed.

Water Street Church of Christ goes back at least to 1889, when Woodbury Church of Christ rolled its old building down the hill, where it was used by the black congregation until 1943. In that year, the congregation began meeting in a tent because of the poor condition of the old building. In 1946, Lydia Gray and Ann Macon donated land for a new church house, which was built in 1947. There are 37 members.

Wood Church of Christ is located on the Highland Rim at the head of Dug Hollow on the Smithville road. It was started soon after the Civil War in an old log house, mainly through the efforts of the Wood family. Wallace Wood gave the land. In 1901, Charlie Blair, Jim Summers, George Elkins, and Greenberry Mullican gave work and lumber for a new building. It served until 1954, when it was replaced by a larger one. Like several other churches in the county, it took its converts to Stone's River for baptism. Mary Parton and her sister Ada Blair were baptized in the river in winter when they had to break the ice.

According to Brown's *History,* the first Church of Christ meeting at the site of Woodbury was held before the county was established. In 1836, when the lots were sold in the new town, William West bought one on the hill on the banks of the river and donated it for a church building. A frame building was constructed on the site. In the late 1880s, a brick building was erected. An inscription on a brick on the front of the building reads, "Wiley and Dodd, Contractors and Builders, April 1889."

This church and the one at New Hope have consistently been the strongest among the Church of Christ congregations in the county. Their lists contain many self-taught preachers of Cannon County as well as the best known names among the Church of Christ preachers in Tennessee, Oklahoma, and Texas—names like Sewell, Lipscomb, Srygley, Elam, Billingsley, Brewer, and Pullias.

Other Churches of Christ in the county are Auburntown, Gassaway, Pleasant Ridge, Sunny Hill, and West High Street in Woodbury.

The Presbyterians

The Presbyterians came relatively late to Cannon County. The first church in the county is said to have been the Thyatira Cumberland Presbyterian Church near Bradyville. The church no longer exists, though the Thyatira Cemetery remains well known and well kept.

The Woodbury Presbyterian Church was organized in 1870.

E. T. Brantley was its first minister. The congregation held services first in the Methodist Church building, with seven members. In 1871 they moved to the courtroom of the courthouse. In 1889 they built a church house of their own. It stood near the square at the southeast corner of Dillon and Main streets. In 1955 they built a new building on West High Street.

The Amity Presbyterian Church was organized in 1939, a few miles south of Woodbury, on the Highland Rim. In 1940, it had 14 members, but it no longer exists.

Church of God or Holiness Church

The Holiness Church began in California in 1880. Services were highly emotional. At the height of religious fervor, converts were sometimes seized with apparent convulsions and rolled or lay prostrate on the ground, a practice which earned them the informal name of Holy Rollers. Some persons claimed to have received the gift of the unknown tongue, by means of which they could communicate with the Divine.

In many ways, they resembled the early Methodists, from whom they sprang but who had grown too sedate for them. In 1894, the Methodist Bishops' "Pastoral Address" referred to an agitation within the ranks of Methodism. "There has sprung up among us," it said, "a party with 'holiness' as a watchword; they have holiness associations, holiness meetings, holiness preachers, holiness evangelists, and holiness property."

The church spread rapidly, reaching Short Mountain in September of 1921, through the evangelism of the Reverend J. P. Catham and the Reverend Richard Turner. At first, the congregation held its meetings in brush arbors on grounds near the site of the old camp meetings of the 1820s and 1830s and in some ways seemed a continuation of them. The church came near swamping other churches in the area.

In the 1930s, the brush arbors gave way to a frame building, and soon after that a bigger one—a brick, steepled house with plastered walls, polished pews, and air conditioning. The flavor of the camp meetings at Short Mountain is gone once more—the fierce, zealous preaching, the shouting in the heat of day and cool of night, the fragrance of drying leaves of the arbor,

and sometimes the bright moon rising over the black mountain.

Church of the Nazarene

The Church of the Nazarene is located near Hollow Springs. It was organized in 1935 with 20 members, after a tent revival was held in the community by the Reverend Cecil Spry. The congregation held services in the Hollow Springs schoolhouse for a time until the building burned. They then built a house of their own. The Reverend Bernice Spry, an older brother of Cecil, became leader. He met with hostility from some members of the community who threw rocks at him and on to the roof of the church during services. With patience, however, he won over his enemies. The church now has a modern building and about 30 members.

Jehovah's Witnesses

The doctrine of Jehovah's Witnesses was spread in Cannon County by traveling Bible students in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Usually, they sold or gave away *Watchtower* publications and Bible study aids.

In 1914-1915, they presented in Woodbury an illustrated program called the *Photo Drama of Creation.* During the 1920s and 1930s, traveling ministers visited the county, holding Bible discussions. Since then, home missionaries have traveled in the county. In the early 1970s, organized Bible studies were started, and a congregation was established in 1976. Meetings were held in Kingdom Hall, one mile east of Woodbury on U. S. Highway 70S.

Seventh-Day Adventists

A Seventh-Day Adventist church was organized in Woodbury in February of 1955, soon after Drs. Russell E. Myers, William A. Bryant, Alex McLarty, William Harp, CPA Ralph Davidson, officer manager Betty Thorgeson, and others opened a clinic at Good Samaritan Hospital.

They acquired land at the corner of Colonial and Dillon Streets and constructed a brick building with seating capacity of 150 persons, plus auxiliary rooms for children, youth, and welfare activities. The dedication service was conducted by Elder Robert H. Pierson, later president of the General Con-

ference of Seventh-Day Adventists, world headquarters of the church. Present membership is about 108.

Education

When the first settlers came, and for several years thereafter, what little learning the children got was received in the home. Ability to read and write and cipher to the rule of three was generally considered sufficient to take a man through the business of living. In 1836, when John Farmer, a boy 12 years old, was apprenticed to George Asby, his master was required by the county court to provide him with 12 months' schooling by the time he reached 14 and six more months by the time he reached 18. Thomas Elkins, when he had nine-year-old Burrel Farles bound to him in the same year, was not required to give Burrel any schooling at all, which held true for most of the girls apprenticed in the early years of the county, it being assumed likely that they would marry husbands who could read, write, and cipher for them.

All early schools were private, which meant the parents, guardians, or perhaps a church paid directly for the children's instruction. Goodspeed says that the first school in the area was at Readyville, taught by James Barkley, a Revolutionary War soldier, in 1810. Jacob McElroy taught a school on Hill Creek between 1810 and 1815. Bartlett Wade taught another school there about the same time, and John Finley taught a school there somewhat later. In 1814, James Rucker, a son of Gideon Rucker, opened a school at Woodville. A few years later, Elliott Turnley taught a school there in the Methodist meetinghouse. Thomas G. Wood taught a school there soon after that.

Brown mentions other early teachers: C. R. Lewis, who taught a school at Woodbury on Lot 15 in 1838; James Travis; Susie Harper; Fatima Sewell, who taught a school in the Christian Church; Felicia Stokes; and Mark Booker, who taught in the Christian Church. The first mention of a free school was in 1852, when Robert Bailey gave a lot to the Woodbury Methodist Church to be used for a free school.

Mary Hall says that W. B. Huddleston taught a school in

Readyville in 1850 known as Pap Huddleston's School. Other early schools were at Bluewing, Short Mountain, Half Acre, Daniel's Chapel, Sycamore, Poplar Stand, Old Macedonia, and Bradyville (taught by Newt Earles, Will Messick, and John Patton at different times).

It was not until 1853 that the state levied taxes for the support of common schools. Then it was only 25 cents on the poll tax and 2½ cents on each $100 worth of taxable property, enough to keep the schools open only a few days each year.

Two years after the county was established, the Legislature "established for the county of Cannon, an Academy called Lawrens [Laurens] Academy, to be located in the town of Woodbury." James Taylor, James J. Trott, Joseph Ramsey, Eli A. Fisher, and Thomas G. Wood were made trustees. A frame building was erected at the corner of present College Street and Stage Road. This building burned in 1859 and was replaced by a brick building with two large rooms and a hall between. William Tufts, said to have come from Massachusetts, was one of the teachers. The school was interrupted by the Civil War, and by 1873 it was closed. The building was sold in that year to Commodore Perry Brown, who used it as a residence. Later, it became a hotel, known as the Gribble House. It burned in 1934.

In 1849, Elder J. M. D. Cates, Baptist minister, founded Marion Institute at Cateston. It came to be what J. H. Grime called "the pride of Salem Association." In 1851, it opened its third session with teachers James A. Delke and Woodlief Thomas. In that year, the school issued a circular describing Mr. Delke as "a regular graduate of the University of North Carolina" and Mr. Thomas as "late of Georgetown College." Tuition ranged from $6 for the First Class (spelling, reading, and writing for a session of five months) to $15 for the Fourth Class (Latin, Greek, and French). Board, including washing and lights, could be had for $20 per session.

The school was chartered in 1854, with Trustees J. M. D. Cates, President, J. R. Taylor, N. M. Taylor, J. B. Armstrong, Rezin Fowler, John Ward, D. B. Smith, C. R. Davis, J. P. Gandy,

Candor McFaddin, John Hollis, S. C. Odom, Mathew Wilson, Nathan Hayes, H. L. Rucks, S. J. Mitchell, Moses Fite, Thomas Fisher, Thomas Stokes, and J. M. Prater. The school was given power to "confer such degrees and literary honors as are usually conferred in colleges and literary institutions." The school does not seem to have survived the Civil War.

In 1857, an attempt was made to establish a school for higher education at Rucker's Knob, near Porterfield. In that year, Henry Goodloe deeded land to trustees of the Philosophean Institute—J. D. Alexander, D. Hogwood, S. B. Creson, W. W. McKnight, and S. H. McKnight. It was probably closed by the Civil War. If it survived at all, it might have been what was known after the war as the Goodloe School.

In 1860, the Baptist Female College at Woodbury was chartered. Trustees were L. H. Bethel, P. C. Talley, Abel Rushing, M. R. Rushing, B. F. Odum, Fountain Owen, and L. D. Stewart. M. R. Rushing gave the land for the building and grounds and for a street 60 feet wide that led from the school, situated where Central High School was located until 1977, to Stage Road. The street, known as College Street, had a tree-lined walk down the middle.

According to "Records of the Sunday School of the Woodbury Baptist Church, 1859-1861," the cornerstone was laid in August of 1859, with President L. H. Bethel presiding. The Baptist Sunday School marched with the members of other Sunday schools in town to the building site. The audience heard speeches by M. M. Brien on Masonry, J. H. St. John on Sunday schools, and the Reverend Young of McMinnville and Mr. R. McKnight on education.

A two-story brick building with a belfry was constructed. The first faculty was composed of Mary Lindsey of Washington College, Mollie Smith, Margaret Bethel, and Tennie Bethel. After the Civil War, the school was in financial trouble. In 1868, it was rechartered as Woodbury College, with the stipulation that "no religious test shall be required, as a condition of admittance," and the trustees and faculty, although they remained the same, were "to ignore all sectarianism in its management."

But in 1879, the school was still in financial trouble, still being unable to pay the building contractor. In that year, the school became recognized as nonsectarian. Trustees were changed to represent every denomination in the community, with two not members of any church. Citizens other than Baptists contributed now to the support of the school and the debt was paid off.

In 1880, the *Woodbury Press* carried a notice that "Prof. J. J. Brents, President of Woodbury College, announces the price of tuition as follows: Primary Courses, $8.00; Preparatory, $12.00; Collegiate, $16.00." In 1890, the county superintendent reported that the college conferred B.S. and B.A. degrees.

The school operated under these conditions until 1918, when it was discontinued. Two years later, it became the first county high school, in a new building. According to a manuscript history of the school by Sterling Brown, it had a change of president from every few months to two years, until Professor E. J. Lehman became president in 1896. He served for 22 years. Under his administration, the school became known as Woodbury Academy, sometimes Lehman Academy.

Meanwhile, the state of the common schools in the county was poor indeed. Paul Turner, in his University of Tennessee master's thesis *An Appraisal of the Cannon County Board of Education,* gives an account of the situation. In 1838, the scholastic population was 1961. In 1855, it was 4844, including 297 blacks. No more than 56 cents per child of public money was spent on common schools. In 1859, six years after the state began levying taxes for the support of schools, it had risen to only 75 cents, still enough for only a few days of school each year.

In 1869 the office of county superintendent of schools was created, the first move to organize a county-wide system. J. P. Elkins was the first superintendent. He reported that the county had then 34 white schools and one black school. In 1873, the superintendent reported that the county had 40 free schools, all of them one-teacher schools. Teachers were paid $30 a month for a term of 60 days. That year, $3586 had been spent on all public schools in the county.

In 1889, County Superintendent James H. Knox reported that a teachers' institute had been held under his direction with more than 100 teachers attending. Another institute was held in 1899, and one in 1901, "with eight outstanding educators in charge for a period of six days." These meetings served the purpose of the later summer sessions in teachers' colleges.

In 1890, County Superintendent Mears reported 30 private schools in the county, with an enrollment of 1550 students. Seven of them were called high schools, which meant they taught some courses above the elementary level. They were located at Mechanicsville, Auburn, Prater, Readyville, Bradyville, Burt, and Rocky Point. Diplomas were awarded for the first time to students completing the required studies in Orthography, Reading, Writing, Elementary Geology of Tennessee, Arithmetic, English Grammer, Geography, United States History, and Principles of Agriculture.

In 1907, teachers' salaries in the county public schools were $35 a month. The superintendent's salary was $300 a year. In 1908, County Superintendent Finley reported that all log school buildings in the county had been eliminated except three. This seemed to be some kind of major progress.

In 1907, the County Board of Education was created, with the county being divided into five school districts, but a county high school was not authorized until 1918, when Woodbury (or Lehman) Academy ceased operation. Two years later, it became the first public high school in the county.

By 1920, both the county and the state had at last seriously begun to accept responsibility for the education of the county's children. But progress was agonizingly slow. Funds were minimal. School officials were more often than not motivated by politics. Indeed, from 1921 to 1929, the board members were chosen by the county court, which could be and often was swayed by a strong political personality. Sometimes this personality was the county superintendent himself, which did not necessarily help the schools. Worse, some members of the board "sold schools."

In 1929, the legislature increased the number of the mem-

Woodbury College (1859-1919), originally Baptist Female College. *Courtesy of Walter McCrary and Charlie Harrell.*

bers of the board to 15, each member elected by the voters of his civil district. This change got the board out of the clutches of the county court, but it did not get the teacher out of the clutches of the school board member. Since there was no tenure law, the teacher was at his mercy.

Beecher Bowen, in his *I've Seen Everything But Money,* describes his first teaching experience in the early 1930s. He taught one year and applied to the board member for the same position next year. The board member "explained at length, that due to his kindness and generosity he hadn't charged me for the privilege of teaching the first year. He said he realized that I was just out of school, and he wanted to give me a year in which to get started. But, if I wanted to remain in the profession, it would cost me seventy-five dollars for the next year."

In 1920, there was at least a one-teacher school in every

community. Consolidation began tentatively in 1922, when the pupils of Prater School, in a now vanished community on Stone's River between Woodbury and Short Mountain, were hauled to Woodbury in a canvas-covered wagon. By 1930, a few other schools had been merged with their larger neighbors. Still, by 1940, there were 32 elementary schools in the county, 29 of them for whites and three for blacks.

The county superintendent in 1943 reported that children in the county were transported to consolidated schools during the past year in five passenger cars, 27 pickup trucks, and 17 trucks with especially made wooden beds. A few black children at Readyville were transported by Greyhound Bus Lines to the Woodbury black school. Elementary teachers were paid according to the schedule set up by the State Department of Education for counties that participated in the educational equalization fund. Salaries ranged from $40 to $138 per month. The median salary was $78.47. The average teacher had two years of college work, and three of them had less than a high school education.

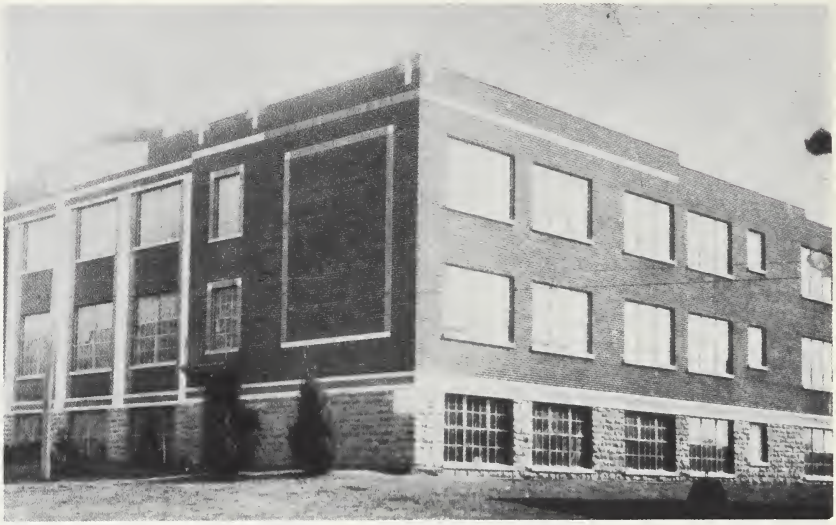
A serious move to consolidate all schools in the county began in the late 1940s. In 1955, the first fully consolidated school was opened at Short Mountain, in a new building. A year later, another was opened near Sheybogan (Mooretown) on Highway 53 and called Woodland. In 1959, Westside School was opened between Woodbury and Readyville on U. S. Highway 70S. Eastside, on the Highland Rim at Bluewing, was opened in 1961. The other consolidated school was at Woodbury, in a building constructed soon after the old high school and elementary school building burned in 1935, on the site of Woodbury (or Lehman) Academy. There was a four-year high school and elementary school at Auburntown, called Auburn School. A two-year high school was at Gassaway, sharing the elementary school building. Both of these buildings burned in the 1970s, Gassaway in June of 1974 and Auburn in August of 1977. Since then, all Gassaway pupils and Auburn high school pupils have been transported to the Cannon County High School in Woodbury. Auburn Elementary remained at Auburntown. A move is now on to build a new school building there.

One of the two buildings built in 1859 at the Baptist Female College to house students. Home of the Dr. J. F. Adams family for many years.

During the administration of County Superintendent William (Barney) Bragg and the new five-member board of education, a move was started to build a new consolidated high school at Woodbury. It was completed in 1977 at Beaver Dam and opened in 1978. Today, it is the only high school in the county.

According to County Superintendent Lytle C. Fowler, the total school population of the county in June of 1979 was a little under 2000. Of these, 621 were high school students. It is interesting to note that in 1908 the scholastic population was given by Superintendent Finley as 3920. The age limit was higher then, and the population was greater, around 11,000. The school term then was 86 days. Teacher preparation is vastly superior to that of the first decade of the century, of course, when teachers had little more schooling than some of their students.

Instead of the few covered wagons and the cattle trucks in which pupils were transported in the 1920s and 1930s, by 1979



Central High School at Woodbury (1935-1979) on the site of old Woodbury College. *Courtesy of Charlie Harrell and Walter McCrary.*

they rode in 45 vehicles, 21 of them buses of 24- to 54-person capacity. Smaller vehicles were three automobiles, three station wagons, four carryalls, three one-half ton panels, and 11 one ton panels.

Economy

The population of Cannon County in 1840 was 7193. It increased by about 1000 persons per decade until 1890, when it reached 12,197. Thereafter, it declined to 8935 by 1930, when an increase set in. After 1940, it declined again to 8467 in 1970. Since 1970, it has risen to 10,234.

Agriculture

The county's economy, from 1800 to 1940, was almost wholly agricultural with just enough business and industrial services to support it. Most of it was subsistence farming. In 1940, only 580 people worked off the farm, while 2403 worked on it. By 1950, the situation had changed dramatically. Then, nearly half of the work force was engaged in nonagricultural employment—1463 to 1699.

Farms had become fewer and larger. In 1942, there were 2102 farms in the county. The average size was 78 acres. In 1950, the average size had increased to 99. In 1974, the average size was 134 acres, and the number of farms had dropped to 748. Farming had shifted from subsistence to profit making. Farm tenancy and mules had almost disappeared. In 1974, 338 farms out of a total of 748 sold more than $2500 worth of products. Thirteen sold from $40,000 to $100,000 worth, and six sold more than $100,000 worth. The rest, 410 farms, sold less than $2500, but most operators of these, 350, worked most of the year off the farm—in Cannon and nearby counties.

Corn was for long the main crop. By 1974, it was hay and forage, a reflection of the fact that dairying and beef raising had become the more important industries. Nearly 400 farms raised more hay and forage than corn. Farmers in general were doing well economically. Only 95 farms had debts of $1000 or more.

Two main factors account for the growth in the farmers' economy: the use of better farming methods introduced by the county agricultural agents and the coming of industry. In a very few years after the 1930s, the Barrens no longer deserved the name but were transformed into some of the most productive lands in the county. Much marginal hill land that had eroded to clay and rocks was returned to pasture and woodland. The rich bottom and rolling lands in the valleys also benefited greatly from better farming methods.

The U. S. Census reports for 1940 gave the real estate value for the county as $3,673,033. The average farmer paid a property tax of $27.82 in 1942. The mean value per acre, including buildings and improvements, was $22.35. Land sold for $5 to $170 per acre. In 1940, cattle and calves were the chief domestic animals, followed by mules and colts. Horses and colts were third in importance. However, the value of hogs and pigs sold outstripped all others.

The average cash income per person in 1940 was $226. Fifty-one farms depended chiefly on dairy products. Forty-two farms depended mostly on poultry and poultry products. Sev-

New county high school building at Beaver Dam.

enty-eight farms depended mostly on field crops, four on forest products, one on fruits. The majority of the farms, 1483, depended on farm products used by the farm households as a major source of income.

In 1940, only 26 tractors were on farms in the county. Ninety-two farms were on hard-surfaced roads; 923 were on gravel roads; 473 were on "improved" dirt roads; 505 were on unimproved dirt roads. Electricity was available to 140 farms out of a total of 2102.

By 1974, the number of farms had been reduced to 648. The number of tractors on farms had risen to 640. Horses on 181 farms numbered 568, and 26 farms had 36 mules. In 1920, 36 mules would have been hitched to the iron courthouse fence, most of them with saddles, on any decent Saturday afternoon.

In 1974, the average land value per acre was $348. In 1979, it was $510 per acre. Total land value was $88,472,855. Assessed value was $41,373,000. The value of improvements on land was $70,616,500.

In the 1960s, a livestock sales organization was formed called Mid-State Producers, Incorporated. Its purpose was to provide a sales outlet for farmers in Cannon and surrounding counties. At present, the association has about 900 members, with 15 directors, most of whom are Cannon Countians. The association opened a sales barn three miles east of Woodbury in 1967. According to County Agent Clayton Glenn, the barn sold over 14,000 head of livestock in its first year for a total of $677,000.

In 1975, it sold 144,396 head, nearly 100,000 of which were feeder pigs, for nearly $6,000,000. In 1978, 170,000 head were sold for over $7,000,000. Of these animals, 155,000 were feeder pigs and 5000 were feeder calves.

Industry

Industry, up to 1935, had meant corn mills, sawmills, carding mills, a gin house or two, a few tanneries, a pottery mill or so, a brickmaking mill, molasses mills, basket- and chairmaking, and corn liquor stills.

In the early days, corn mills were along Stone's River, at the heads of streams, wherever a spring or branch had fall enough to operate an overshot wheel. Most of them are forgotten. Some remembered cannot be located precisely. Many of them had different owners at different times. Mills named by Goodspeed and Brown were Ready's Mill, 1812, the only one still in operation; Rucker's Mill, 1814; Prater's Mill, 1820; Whittaker's Mill, 1816; Moorehead's Mill, 1812; Wood's Mill (later known as Osment's Mill); Hill's Mill; Patton's Mill; Elam's Mill; Pendleton's Mill; Hancock's Mill; Neely's Mill (later known as Henpeck); Rushing's Mill; Justice's Mill (later known as Shacklett's Mill); Brevard's Mill; Bratton's Mill; and McBroom's Mill.

Ready's Mill, McBroom's Mill, Brevard's Mill, Shacklett's Mill, and Wood's Mill were also flour mills. Rucker's Mill, Bratton's Mill, Wood's Mill and several others were also carding mills. Rucker's Mill also had a cotton gin and a sawmill.

There was a tannery at Bradyville, run by a Pinkerton, and a Brewer Tannery in the Fifth District, which later moved to Woodbury. There were a pottery kiln and a saddle and harness shop at Mechanicsville.

In 1850, the Sixth District, which includes Woodbury, had eight blacksmiths: W. S. Dobbs, Elijah Stephens, Elijah Dobbs, A. J. Perry, C. J. Sullivan, Elijah Neely, John Barrett, and Newman Hollensworth. It had three shoemakers: W. H. Peyton, Grady Saundridge and A. L. Carr. There were four wagonmakers: John Lemay, Benjamin Phillips, Daniel Manus, and Edmond Perry. There were three tanners: Elijah Mears, Peter Keeton, Abraham Hathaway. (Two tanners, the young Brewer

brothers Jesse and Benjamin, who had moved from the Fifth District, drowned in the flood of 1850.) Saddlers were William Miller, George Warren, and Thomas Dixon. (Later, Zack Dillon would run a saddle and shoe shop well into the twentieth century.) Millers were Jesse McGee and James Vinson. Tailors were Doctor F. Murphey and J. J. Smith.

Merchants in 1850 were W. T. McBroom, Z. L. Brevard, A. H. Weedon, A. D. Fugitt, Thomas Brevard, A. J. Wood, F. Coleman, and Eli Bailey. Innkeepers were H. D. McBroom, Gabriel Hume, and John Fisher.

There were always a few basketmakers and chairmakers, most of them in family units. In the 1920s and 1930s, these were concentrated in two areas where the hills join the Highland Rim. One was between Center Hill and the head of Parchcorn, known as Thomas Town. The other was between Bluewing and Iconium, known as Manus Town. A few others were scattered here and there along the edge of the Rim, the best known being Willie and Maggie Murphy at Short Mountain.

The first publishing of record was done by J. M. D. Cates, a Baptist minister, at his home at Cateston from about the 1850s to the 1880s. He published a church paper called the *Christian Herald,* later called the *Baptist Messenger.*

The first newspaper of record was the *Woodbury Press,* published in 1874 by W. C. Houston and John C. Cook. Since then, it has gone under various names: *Cannon Courier, Woodbury Herald, The Times, Woodbury Press* again, and then *Cannon Courier* again. The plant burned in 1934, destroying all files. The *Courier* (pronounced Coo'yer) has been published since then by Hayden Smith, then Mel Bryson, and now David and Tommy Bragg.

The first real factory came to the county in 1935, with the help and encouragement of county officials and the newly organized Woodbury Lions Club. This was the Armour and Company cheese plant. In an effort to help improve dairy herds, the Lions Club bought registered dairy bulls and made them available to farmers.

In 1947, county officials and the Lions Club made it possible

John Shacklett, owner and operator of Shacklett's Mill on Stone's River, at his farm near Woodbury around 1880. *Courtesy of Richard Shacklett.*

Rainbow Falls Mill built by Booker Sekins around 1890 at the head of Parchcorn. *Courtesy of Shelah Foster.*

for the Colonial Shirt Corporation to start a factory in Woodbury, raising $5,000 to help it meet a payroll. By 1953, it was producing 10,000 dozen shirts per week, with annual sales of over $7,000,000.

In 1958, the shirt factory became a public corporation. In 1954, it established a branch in Portland, Tennessee; in 1956 one in Jamestown; and in 1958 branches in Altamont and on the island of Jamaica. In 1966, the corporation was acquired by Kayser-Roth Corporation, which, in turn, was acquired by Gulf and Western in 1976. In all, there are 32 factories, with Woodbury the base of operations. The Woodbury plant employs about 300 people.

In 1969 the V. E. Anderson Manufacturing Company opened a factory in Woodbury to make storm doors and win-

dows. In 1978 it became a subsidiary of Al Can Aluminum Corporation. It employs 60 people.

Val D'Or, Incorporated, then known as Cannon County Sportswear, came to Woodbury in 1972, opening with 55 employees in a garage building. In 1973 it moved into a new building. It employs 232 people. It contracted to make all sportswear for United States athletes in the 1980 Olympics, which were ultimately boycotted by the United States when Russia invaded Afghanistan.

The Santini Corporation came to Woodbury in 1973 as Jaymar, Incorporated. In 1979 the name was changed to Santini. It employees 90 workers and makes ladies' wear.

Shirtcraft and Company was started in Woodbury in 1973 by Paul Alexander, with six machines and two employees. In 1979 it had 52 machines and 45 employees, with outlets for shirts and blouses all over the county. It is no longer in operation in 1981.

Banks

Sterling Brown says that Woodbury had no bank until 1888, when Warren Cummings and Simp Fugitt organized the Bank of Woodbury, with Cummings as president and Fugitt as cashier. The next bank was the People's Bank which became the First National Bank by 1908, and then in 1909 became the First State Bank. Cannon County Banking Company was the next bank formed. The three banks together had deposits of just over $1,000,000. The Bank of Woodbury was the only one of the three to survive the Depression.

In the 1920s, the county had five other banks in Bradyville, Readyville, Auburntown, Braxton, and Gassaway. The Bank of Auburn and the Melton Bank at Gassaway rode out the Depression and are doing business today.

The Bank of Woodbury survived the Depression by becoming a branch of the Commerce Union Bank of Nashville. Shelah Hawkins became cashier, with Charles Hawkins, Jim Oliver, and Dorothy Wood as assistants. Walter Hancock was managing director. In 1941, the bank was sold to a group of Woodbury business men and reorganized, with Dr. J. F. Adams as presi-

Henpeck Mill. An artist's sketch printed in *The Tennessean. Courtesy of Miles Jennings.*

dent. On Dr. Adams' retirement, his son Frank became president. In 1967, William (Bill) Smith became president and remains so today, with Christine Dillon as vice president. In 1954, the bank moved to its present location on the northeast corner of the public square. It now has a branch at Edgefield and is expanding its building on the square. In July of 1981, it had total assets of over $57,000,000. It employs 60 people.

In 1967, the People's Bank was organized in Woodbury, with Walter (Cap) McCrary as president. In 1974, it became a branch of the Hamilton National Bank of Chattanooga, with Tom Maxwell as president. In 1976, the Hamilton National Bank failed and the Woodbury branch was bought by Tennessee National Bancshares of Maryville, Tennessee. It was reorganized as the Bank of Cannon County, with Jerry French as president. In July of 1981 the bank was bought by Universal Bancshares based in Nashville. The bank is situated at the corner of Main and McCrary streets. Total assets in July of 1981 were just under $8,000,000.

In 1978, the Bank of Auburn merged with the Bank of Commerce, with Steve Smith as vice president.

The Melton Bank at Gassaway was organized in 1903 by the Melton family, with George G. Melton as president. It has always been in the Melton family. It has total assets of just under $400,000 and total deposits of just under $300,000. Nannie Melton is president.

Place Names in Cannon County Past and Present

Cannon County has only one town, properly speaking—Woodbury, the county seat. Two or three other places in the county are large enough to be called villages—Auburntown, Readyville, and perhaps Bradyville and Gassaway. Most of the rest are hamlets at most or places on a road, with a few houses, a store and perhaps a church. Maybe they once had a school, and around it were scattered widely separated farm houses within a two- or three-mile radius.

Some no longer exist, even though the name lingers, victims of the automobile and better roads, enabling the traveler to be in Woodbury or even Murfreesboro or McMinnville or Manchester in the time it used to take to get to the local store. For a few, even the name does not linger, vanished hamlets or less, until some reference to a past event or a record is found which evokes their ghosts—names like Prospect, Talome, or Prater.

The following is a list of place names in the county today, together with places that have long gone out of existence but in their day played a significant part in the life and lore of the county.

Amity

Amity is on Highway 53, about seven or eight miles south of Woodbury. It was named in 1939, when the Kruthaup family founded a Presbyterian church there. Presbyterian church services were discontinued in 1963. Today, the building is used by a Baptist congregation. The place has a cemetery and a store. A Church of Christ is located about one-half mile away.

Auburntown

Auburntown is a village of about 300 people located in the

extreme northwest section of the county, where Marshall Creek flows into Saunder's Fork. The first known building there was the Saunder's Fork Baptist Church (1822), known locally then as Poplar Stand. The name was changed to Auburn and remained so until 1919. In that year, the post office was re-established and named Auburntown to avoid confusion with other Auburns.

In 1850, Auburn had three blacksmiths (Francis Cooper, William Thomas, and C. B. Summars), a tailor (William Cummings), and a merchant (A. N. Fisher). It also had a saloon. In 1874, Auburn was a post village and had two or three stores, a school, and two or three churches.

During the Civil War, the village was on the direct military route between the Union forces at Murfreesboro and the Confederate John Hunt Morgan's forces at Liberty. Quarrels having their origins in the war sparked a deadly feud that would trouble many of its citizens well into the twentieth century. In 1869, Auburn Academy was chartered, under the control of the Auburn Baptist Church.

In 1964, the village had four general stores, two garages, a cafe, and a radio and television shop, a drugstore department in a dry goods store, a post office, a bank, a high school, and an elementary school. Most of the stores are now gone, but it has acquired a restaurant and a shirt factory. The high school students are now transported to Woodbury. Many people of the village commute to work in places like Murfreesboro and Nashville.

Berea

Berea was once the site of a school and a church, on the upper reaches of Hollis Creek. Both the school and the church were moved one mile downstream to a place named Sunny Slope, on the road to Woodbury. The school was discontinued with the consolidation of county schools. The church is still there.

Bethlehem

Bethlehem is the site of a Church of Christ on Horse Spring Branch, about one mile east of Burt.

Blanton

Blanton was the site of a school on Good Ridge between Osment Chapel and the mouth of Shinbone Hollow at Prater.

Bluewing

Bluewing is five miles east of Woodbury on Highway U. S. 70 South and two miles southwest of Center Hill. It was settled by William West. West's neighbors, at the heads of Hill Creek and Parchcorn (then called Thomas Creek), were Alexander Hill, Archibald Prater (who built Prater's mill), William Higgins, and Benjamin Pendleton. Brown's *History* says that for many years Methodist camp meetings were held there. Today, it is the site of Eastside Elementary School and Bluewing Baptist Church.

Brady's Rock

Brady's Rock was on the east side of Carson Fork Branch, about one mile east of Burt, on a farm owned by Joe Frank Miller. During the Civil War, both Federals and Confederates used the place as a camping ground from time to time. It is said to have been named for a wandering preacher named Brady, who preached there the first Campbellite sermon ever preached in the county. The rock has almost disappeared under dirt and overgrowth.

Bradyville

Bradyville is a village eleven miles southwest of Woodbury, on Brawley's Fork, more or less in the center of the area that saw the first settlers that came into the county. It is about three miles from the original Sageley house. In its early days, it had a mill, built and operated by Silas Patton, and a school.

By the middle 1800s, the village and its environs had six blacksmiths (Stephen and Elisha Crowder, A. G. Millikin, Jacob Derryberry, Samuel Gray, and James Whitamore), four merchants (Jesse Whitamore, Isaac Simpson, David Simpson, and Peter Price), a wheelwright (Joseph Smith), two millers (John McElroy and Alexander Brown), and one of the three largest schools in the county. The village saw considerable activity during the Civil War, being one of the strategic points in the Confederate line of defense while the Confederate army was

encamped at Tullahoma in 1863. Skirmishes were fought there on February 16, March 1, and June 24 in 1863.

In 1874, Bradyville was a post village and had two or three general stores. About 1900, it had a boarding school, with two or three dormitories. In 1918, it acquired a high school, which operated for five years. Several churches were outside the immediate area of the village.

Today, it has a general store, a post office, and a church.

Braxton

Braxton was four miles west of Woodbury, on Highway U. S. 70S. In the 1920s, it had a bank and a store, but both fell victims to the Depression. Nothing of Braxton exists today, except the name, applied to a small farm at the site.

Browntown (Crisp)

Browntown was in the extreme southeastern section of the county, near the Warren County line. It was named for the Brown family, who had considerable land holdings there before the Civil War. After the war, the former family slaves continued to live in the area and called their community Browntown. The place later became known as Crisp, after a man who gave them land for a church. Before desegregation and consolidation of schools, one of the county's three schools for blacks was located there. Today, it has only a church.

Brysonville

Brysonville was the name of a settlement of Bryson families near Dividing Ridge on Saunder's Fork. A post office was there from the 1880s to about 1905.

Burgen

Burgen used to be the site of a store, which was discontinued around 1950. The general area, still called Burgen, is on the upper reaches of Carson Fork, on a road which forks to lead to Parker Hill and Hollow Springs on the Highland Rim. The place was named for Burgen Shelton, who operated a store there.

Burt

Burt is a small hamlet on Carson Fork and Horse Spring

Branch in the southwestern part of the county, about eight miles from Woodbury and three miles northeast of Bradyville. The first Baptist church established in the county on Brawley's Fork in 1808 was moved to Burt in 1907 and has remained there since. Until recently, the place had a general store and a school. It took its name from Burton McFerrin, who ran a store there.

Carman

Carman was neither a village nor a hamlet, nor even a community in the usual sense, but a telephone exchange of the old Home Telephone Company. The switchboard was in a private home on the Highland Rim between McMahan Church and Ivy Bluff, near Duke Creek at its juncture with Barren Fork (sometimes called Witty Creek).

Cateston

Cateston is about a mile and a half south of Highway U. S. 70S on the road to Bradyville. It got its name from J. M. D. Cates, a Baptist minister and educator who lived there from the 1840s to the 1880s. Cates founded a church there and a school, called Marion Academy, in 1850. The church was later moved to Burt, and the academy did not survive the Civil War. The site now has only a store and the Cateston Cemetery.

Center Hill

Center Hill is a hamlet on the Highland Rim about three miles south of Short Mountain and two miles northeast of Bluewing and one mile from the heads of Parchcorn and Shinbone Hollows. It has two churches, a store, and small clothing factory. It formerly had a school. There is no hill there at all.

Clearmont

Clearmont was the site of a gristmill just off the Ivy Bluff road from U. S. 70S by way of Pleasant View. The mill was water powered.

Coldwater

Coldwater was on the Highland Rim, on the road between Sheybogan and Red Hill. It was the site of a school beside a big spring.

Crossroads (Tucker's Chapel)

Crossroads is at the east end of the east spur of Short Mountain, where the roads to Blue's Hill and Purser Hill cross. It was formerly the site of a Methodist church, Tucker's Chapel, and a school.

Culpepper

Culpepper was located at the mouth of Locke Creek, four miles west of Woodbury on the Murfreesboro-Woodbury Turnpike, now Highway U. S. 70 South. For long, it was the site of the Readyville school. In stage coach days, it had a post station and, when Old Stage Road became the Murfreesboro-Woodbury Turnpike, a toll booth.

For years before 1930, the county Fourth of July picnic was held there. Today, only a store is there, successor to the old Duggin store. The name Culpepper was probably brought from Culpeper, Virginia, by Gideon Rucker, who lived there in the early 1800s. The Virginia name Culpeper picked up an extra *p* in Tennessee. The place name is no longer used.

Curlee-Denver

If you're speaking of the church, it's Curlee. If you're speaking of the store, it's Denver. The place is on Brawley's Fork, about half way between Highway U. S. 70S and Bradyville. It was there that Calvin Curlee broke with the Baptists to form the "Christian" (Campbellite) church known as Curlee. It still has the church and a store.

Elkins

Elkins is on the ridges on Highway U. S. 70S about four miles east of Woodbury. It used to have a school and a church. It still has the church.

Gassaway

Gassaway is located eight miles northeast of Woodbury, just off the road to Liberty and on Clear Fork Creek just before it is joined by Cannell Branch. Benjamin Gassaway's family were among the early settlers there. In the 1880s, the village took the name when a post office was established there.

It has a general store, a church, and the Melton Bank, one of the three banks in the county. For some years, it had a two-

year high school, which was discontinued after the building burned in the early 1970s. Pupils are now transported to Woodbury. In 1930, the population of the village was about 100. It has considerably less than that now.

Geedville

Geedville was the name applied to a school situated on the Highland Rim, about four miles south of Highway U. S. 70S near the Warren County line, in the southeastern part of the county. It is on the road between Red Hill and McMahan. The school was discontinued, but the old building still stands, and the name Geedville is applied to the general area.

Gilley Hill

Gilley Hill is on a ridge between the Highland Rim and the hills, about a mile west of Hollow Springs, just before the road to Bradyville takes a dip down Shelton Branch. It has a church and a cemetery.

Half Acre (Mechanicsville)

Half Acre is another name for Mechanicsville. It is located on the Highland Rim in the extreme northeastern section of the county, at the base of the east spur of Short Mountain and on the Smithville road. In the early 1800s, it was the site of Methodist camp meetings. In the 1850s, it had a wagon maker, two or three stores, a gristmill, a saddle shop, a tannery, and three or four blacksmiths.

During the Civil War, the place was on a direct line of military communication between McMinnville and Liberty. It was also the home and sanctuary for a gang of guerrillas headed by Hiram Taylor (Pomp) Kersey and Jack Neely, who claimed to have been authorized by their superior Confederate officers to range over much of the northern section of the county and protect citizens and property from the depredations of the Federals and their local home guards based at Liberty. In July of 1864, Kersey's and Neely's band were tracked down and killed at their hiding place at Mechanicsville by a contingent of William B. Stokes' Fifth Tennessee Cavalry. Their bodies were taken to Liberty and put on display.

After the Civil War, Mechanicsville was an education center.

For many years, it had a boarding school. Tradition and Walter Womack *(McMinnville at a Milestone)* speak of a Randall Academy run by a former Confederate officer. A boarding school was there in the 1890s, run by Professor L. P. Evans. The school was highly regarded in Warren, Cannon, and DeKalb counties. Neither of these schools was chartered.

During the late 1800s and early 1900s, the place had a post office, a tannery, schools, a store or two, and two or three blacksmith shops. A Mr. Maddux and Robert Motley ran stores there from about 1900 until about 1925. Nothing is left of the hamlet today, except two or three rotting store buildings and dwellings, one of the oldest and best kept cemeteries in the county, and Old Short Mountain Methodist Church.

Hardscrabble

Hardscrabble is at the mouth of Bryson Hollow on the upper reaches of Saunder's Fork. It is the site of the Saunder's Fork Baptist Church and about a mile south of the Shiloh Baptist Church. The name Hardscrabble is widely used but is not in good standing on upper Saunder's Fork. When a post office was established there in the 1880s, it took the name of Brysonville.

Hollow Springs

Hollow Springs is south of Woodbury, near the Coffee County line and on the Highland Rim east of Gilley Hill. It has two churches, a store, and a sawmill. Formerly, it had a school.

Hopewell

Hopewell is on the headwaters of Brawley's Fork, two miles south of Bradyville. It is the site of Hopewell Church. It used to have a school.

Iconium

Iconium is on the Highland Rim just above the headwaters of Hill Creek. It is on or near the route of the Old Stage Road, built in 1811. But the name Iconium is fairly new. It was given to a church there when its name was changed from Woods' Church in 1927. In the 1930s, Iconium had a store, a church, and a school. For a long time, the church and the school shared the same building. Today, it has only the church.

Ivy Bluff

Ivy Bluff is situated on the Highland Rim in the extreme southeastern section of the county, near the Warren and Coffee County lines. It was a center of Methodist activity in the first half of the 1800s. In the 1930s, it had two churches (Methodist and Baptist), a store, a sawmill, and a school. Today, it has only one church (Methodist) and a store.

Jernigan

Jernigan was in the extreme southwestern part of the county, on Dug Hollow road and near the Rutherford County line. It was, a few years ago, the site of a school.

Jimtown

Jimtown was situated near Burt on Horse Spring Branch, upstream from Bethlehem Church, in the southwestern part of the county. The place was named for Jim Jamerson (pronounced Jim'erson) who operated a legal still there in the 1890s. Farmers hauled their apples to the still from June to November to be made into apple brandy. When the apple brandy business was slack, Jamerson made corn whiskey. The place was incorporated and policed. Jamerson provided a calaboose for those who drank too much of the product.

Jones's Chapel

Jones's Chapel was on Dividing Ridge, about five miles north of Woodbury and between the headwaters of Hurricane Creek to the north and Doolittle Branch to the south. It used to have a church and a school, meeting in the same building.

Leoni (formerly Bear Wallow)

Leoni is on Highway U. S. 70S, six miles east of Woodbury. It is the site of a church. It used to have a school and, from the 1880s to around 1905, a post office. Sterling Brown says in his *History* that in the early days the place was known as Bear Wallow because "roving Turks" brought bears and staged wrestling matches between them and challengers. Bets were made and prize money was awarded.

McMahan

McMahan is on the Highland Rim in the southeastern sec-

tion of the county on McMahan Creek and two miles north of Ivy Bluff. It got its name from a church, which it still has. Formerly, it had a school.

Manus Town

Manus Town was a community along a one and one-half mile stretch of road and woods between Bluewing and Iconium. It was peopled mostly by Manuses and Davises, families who made chairs and baskets and sold them to local stores and peddlers. Sometimes, one or two enterprising persons among them loaded a truck with them and drove to northern cities like Detroit and Akron, where they sold them on the streets for much higher prices than they could get at home. The "town" was easily identified by the piles of white oak and hickory splints and shavings in the yards. It has disappeared.

Mt. Ararat

Mt. Ararat (pronounced A'rat) is a small community strung along Pea Ridge north of the west spur of Short Mountain near the DeKalb County line. Like Mt. Pleasant (now Pleasant Ridge), the place used to have a reputation for wickedness. It used to have a store, a school, and a church. Now it has only the church.

Mud College

Mud College was at the base of the north side of the west spur of Short Mountain, on a road leading around the mountain to Sugar Tree Knob. It acquired its name when it was a subscription school. Later, when it became a county school, it retained the name. It has disappeared.

Negro Gull

Negro Gull, according to James Dillon, Warren County Historian, was a little southeast of Center Hill. It got its name when a family of freed slaves from Virginia bought 1200 acres of land from William Bates and settled on it near a spring before the Civil War. A member of this family, William Hulda (who later called himself William Houchin), became one of the richest businessmen and benefactors of McMinnville in the late 1800s. The spring came to be known as Houchin Spring.

New Hope

New Hope is the site of a church one mile east of Readyville, on Highway U. S. 70S.

Osment Chapel

Osment Chapel was the site of a church on the Highland Rim and on the road from Half Acre to Center Hill. It was named for the Osment family, who established it. The place used to have a store. Both store and church have disappeared.

Parker Hill

Parker Hill is nine miles south of Woodbury, at the western edge of the Highland Rim, where the hills begin. It has a store and used to have a school.

Petty's Gap

Petty's Gap is on the Highland Rim at the head of Horse Spring Branch, south of Woodbury, and a little west of Sheybogan. It is on an old road to McMinnville.

Pleasant Ridge

First known as Mt. Pleasant, the community is on Dividing Ridge at the heads of Cavender, Rockhouse, Cannell, Sycamore, and Hurricane branches. In the 1870s, the place was described by J. H. Grime, in his *History of Middle Tennessee Baptists,* as "a very wicked community." Guerrillas on both sides used the area as common ground during the Civil War, giving origin to a feud that lasted into the early 1900s. The place has two churches and a cemetery. It used to have a store and a school.

Pleasant View

Pleasant View is on the Highland Rim, eight miles southeast of Woodbury and two and a half miles south of Highway U. S. 70S. The name was given the place by a preacher who looked around him and declared, "This is a pleasant view." The name dates from about 1900. In the 1930s, it had a gristmill, a store, two churches, and a school. Today, it has the two churches and a store.

Porterfield

Porterfield is in the extreme western part of the county, on the Rutherford-Cannon County line. Although the area saw

early settlement, the place did not receive its name until a post office was established there in the late 1880s. It was named for a resident, Arn Porterfield. It had a school and usually two stores until about 1950. Now, it has only the one store.

Prater

Prater is a good example of what happened to many of the original hamlets in the county. It thrived for a time and vanished. Prater was located about halfway between Woodbury and Short Mountain, near the mouth of Shinbone Hollow (formerly called Elledge Hollow). It was on the Stone's River Road, the first road built into the future county.

It is said that the place was named for Archibald Prater, who built a gristmill there about 1815. Archibald Prater, however, built his mill at the head of Parchcorn Hollow (then called Thomas Creek), at what is now called Rainbow Falls, some five or more miles away by river and branch road and wilderness. The place may have been named for Mark and Masy Prater, blacksmiths there after the Civil War.

In 1850, the place had a store, run by J. B. Rains. After the Civil War and until near the turn of the century, it had a furniture and coffin shop. Around 1910 and 1920, it had a gristmill, a school, two sawmills, a church, two blacksmith shops, and a store. In 1882, a post office was established there. It was discontinued in 1906.

Prater ceased to exist in the 1930s, after the state and county built a road that no longer required the traveler to cross the river 19 times between Woodbury and Short Mountain.

Prospect

Prospect was on Hill Creek, about halfway between Woodbury in the hills and Iconium on the Rim. It got its name from the old Prospect Methodist Church established there in the early 1800s. The Old Stage Road ran by or down Prospect Hill in 1811. The church has long since vanished.

Rabbit Bluff

Rabbit Bluff was at the confluence of Wilmouth Creek and Turkey Branch, about halfway between Sugar Tree Knob and Gassaway. It was the site of Rabbit Bluff school.

Readyville

Readyville is on Stone's River, six miles west of Woodbury, on the Rutherford-Cannon County line. It was, in succession, on the Stone's River Road (built in 1806), the Old Stage Road (built in 1811), the Murfreesboro-Woodbury Turnpike (built in the 1850s), and Highway U. S. 70 South (built in 1923-1924). It is probably the oldest village in the county, antedating Woodbury, being settled as early as 1802 by the Charles Ready and George Brandon families. In 1812, Charles Ready built a gristmill on the river bank across from his house. In 1829, he built a large colonial brick house. The house and the successor to his mill are still standing, in good condition.

During the Civil War, the village was on a direct military route between Federal occupied Murfreesboro and points east and, consequently, saw much military action and traffic. From January to July 1863, the Federals maintained a military post and camp ground there. Four skirmishes were fought at or near the village—on June 7, October 5, October 6, 1863, and on September 6, 1864.

Readyville saw its heyday from about 1880 to about 1920. It had two or three stores, a post office, a post station, a telephone exchange, a couple of blacksmith shops, a locally built electric plant, an ice factory, and one of the largest flour and corn mills in Middle Tennessee. (In 1973, the mill was placed on the National Register of Historic Places.) It had a population of about 150. It still has nearly all of its original residential houses, a sawmill, an automobile repair service, a small topper fabrication plant, a post office, and one or two gasoline stations. The mill is not presently in operation.

Red Hill

In England, it would be Richmond. In France, it would be Rougemont. But in Cannon County, it is Red Hill. It is on the Highland Rim, where there is no hill at all, on the road between Sheybogan and Geedville. In 1921, it had a church, a store, and a school. It still has the church.

Robinson

Robinson is on Robinson Ridge on the Tennessee Basin

Divide between the Cumberland River watershed and the Duck River watershed. It is near the site of vanished Old Fort Nash established in 1784 by North Carolina to help protect the immigration route leading to the Cumberland settlements. The place now has only a cemetery.

Rocky Point

Rocky Point was situated in the southwestern part of the county on a rocky knoll where Duck Branch joins Carson Fork. A Methodist Church was established there, probably in the 1830s or 1840s. The earliest church record in existence is dated 1843. The church no longer exists.

Sheybogan (Mooretown, Smith's Grove)

Sheybogan, Mooretown, and Smith's Grove—all of these names refer to just about the same place. It is four miles south of Woodbury, on the Highland Rim where it joins the hills of the Central Basin. Sheybogan (pronounced Shebóggy by most people) was its happier, original name, which it held undisturbed until the 1930s. It then had two stores, a church, a sawmill, and a school. When the school was discontinued with the consolidation of schools, a church group bought the building and moved it on logs a short distance away for the use of their congregation. The place was then called Mooretown as well as Sheybogan. The church group named their church Smith's Grove, which seems now to be supplanting the name Mooretown, and both threaten to supplant Sheybogan.

Simmons Chapel

Simmons Chapel is on the Highland Rim at the edge of the hills, between Sheybogan and Hollow Springs. It is the site of a church.

Sugar Tree Knob

When physical Sugar Tree Knob had no trees, it looked like a doorknob. It is grown up now. The tallest hill in the Dividing Ridge system, it is located a mile or so from the western foot of the west spur of Short Mountain. On the narrow ridge between the knob and the mountain is a church, once called Acre Church, but now called Sugar Tree Knob Church. For long,

Jesse Laurence House on the Seal's Hollow Road, built in 1859. Now the home of Mr. and Mrs. Jimmy Blocker.

the building was used for both church services and a school. A separate school was built in the late 1920s, but it was discontinued about 15 years later. It was one of the last three one-teacher schools in the county. The church is still there.

Summertown (Stringtown)

Summertown was a short row of houses on Sycamore Creek, about one mile west of Sycamore Church.

Talome

Talome was located about halfway up Rockhouse, a south-flowing branch into Stone's River from Dividing Ridge, which separates it by a few yards from the head of Cannell Branch, flowing north toward Gassaway. A general store and blacksmith shop seem to have been there before the Civil War. Certainly, a store and a blacksmith shop were there soon after the Civil War and as late as the 1930s, operated by the Laurence and then by the Hawkins families.

The origin of the name Talome is not known. In 1889, a post office was established there, with Benjamin Laurence as

postmaster. It was discontinued in 1905. The name Talome is forgotten now, except by a very few.

Thomas Town

Thomas Town was a community without a store, blacksmith shop, school, church, or any other community service, along a one-mile strip of ridge road between Center Hill and the head of Parchcorn Hollow. It was peopled by Thomases, who, like the Manuses and Davises of Manus Town, made baskets and chairs and sold them in the local markets or, occasionally, trucked them to Nashville and cities in the North. They were most active from about 1900 to about 1940.

The "town," like Manus Town, with which they were closely allied by marriage and association, has entirely disappeared.

Thyatira

Thyatira is located a little north and west of Bradyville, near the Rutherford County line. It was the site of Thyatira Presbyterian Church. The church has disappeared, and the name is now applied to the cemetery.

Tolbertsville

Tolbertsville was a community made up mostly of Tolberts who lived in Tolbert Hollow on the headwaters of Brawley's Fork in the extreme southwestern part of the county, just north of the Cannon-Coffee County line. It existed in the late 1800s and early 1900s.

Woods

Woods is located on the Highland Rim, directly on the north side of the head of Dug Hollow of the East Fork of Stone's River. For long, it had a school as well as a church, in the same building. It still has the church.

Woodbury

Woodbury is the only town in the county. In the 1870s, J. B. Killebrew, author of *Resources of Tennessee*, looked at it and said:

> . . . despite all the natural beauty of the surroundings, Woodbury has a sleepy appearance. No manufacturing establishments give life to the place. A court house, seven dry goods stores, two drug stores, three groceries, two blacksmith shops,

> one carriage shop, two saddlery establishments, and the usual number of lawyers' offices and doctors' shops comprise the business portion of the place. It has a population of about 500. There are three churches, one Methodist, one Baptist, and one Christian. The Presbyterians hold worship in the upper story of the court house. School facilities are very good. The *Woodbury Press,* a weekly paper, is published here.

What Killebrew said about Woodbury's sleepy appearance was essentially true until the third decade of this century, when B. Laurence would still shut the door of his hardware and farm implement store in the late afternoon and walk across the river bridge below town to get his cow out of the rented pasture and drive her up Main Street, prodding her rump now and then with a switch, to his home on the corner of Main Street and Manchester Road (now South McCrary Street). Next morning, he drove her back to the pasture, meeting up with several other Woodbury citizens doing the same thing, and opened his store for the day. The town, then, had a population of 501, according to the town limits sign at Edgefield.

The place was first called Danville, after taking the post station from Woodville, less than a mile to the east, in 1827. In 1836, when the county was formed, the name was changed to Woodbury.

The town was incorporated in 1852, but gave up its charter in 1880 because of the four-mile law. It was rechartered in 1925. In 1850, there were eight merchants in the town. Lawyers were F. D. Wrather, Abraham Burger, Jonathan Fare, Joshua Barton, and M. W. McKnight. Eleven carpenters and 12 blacksmiths were in the town and its environs—also three wagon makers, one saddlery, one tanner, and a miller. Doctors were C. S. New, W. D. Gowen, J. M. Gowen, and John A. Wood.

In 1886, the population of Woodbury had grown to about 600 people. According to Goodspeed's *History,* there were more than a dozen businesses. Among those selling dry goods and groceries were Martin and Gribble, McFerrin and Wiley, Hoover and Mason, J. A. H. Thompson, Commodore Perry Brown, J. G. Smith and Brothers, and Elijah and J. T. Stephens. R. H. Preston sold groceries only. A drugstore was run by William

Brewer, C. McBroom, and J. H. Thrower. Zack Dillon and his brother ran a harness shop. T. J. Vance ran a livery stable. An undertaking and furniture establishment was run by J. H. Thrower. The town had one hotel, run by W. A. Talley. Doctors were W. D. Gowen, J. M. Gowen, and John A. Wood.

The population of Woodbury remained nearly constant until about 1940. Since then, it has quadrupled to about 2500. Several factories have come to town, situated mostly in an industrial park on the south side. Another industrial park is being planned to be located across the river on the Doolittle road. The town has eight churches, a new county high school, an elementary school, nine lawyers, a half dozen doctors, and many other professional people. Its newest acquirement is the Stone's River Hospital, built across the river on the Doolittle road under the aegis of the Hospital Corporation of America. It supplants the Good Samaritan Hospital at the corner of Main and Tatum Streets, which has served the county and environs since 1930.

Woodbury Bridge on the Murfreesboro Turnpike, around 1870. *Courtesy of Walter McCrary and Charlie Harrell.*

Christopher Columbus Brown House, built in 1869 and long the home of Mr. and Mrs. Walter Hancock. Located on the NE corner of the courthouse square, it is now the home of Mr. and Mrs. Roy Fuston.

A theater has recently been incorporated, the Cannon Community Playhouse. It opened in 1980 and will present four plays each year, using local talent. Each year, the Bank of Commerce sponsors and administers a two-day event called "Cannon County Good Ole Days." In December of each year, the personnel of the bank present a community Christmas pageant.

The Woodbury Lions Club, which is actually made up of over 100 members drawn from all sections of the county, has, since 1935, taken the lead in many programs that have contributed greatly to most facets of Woodbury and Cannon County life. A Jaycee Club has been revived. A community center and athletic park are in constant use. A senior citizens center has been operating for some years.

Since the 1930s, the town has acquired a water system, a sewer system, paved streets, and most other facilities of modern living.

Woodbury in 1938, taken from Round Hill. This view is to the left of the scene in the photograph on the facing page. *Courtesy of Walter McCrary and Charlie Harrell.*

Contemporary County Characteristics

For entertainment, the people of the county depend on their own resources, or they attend horse shows, tractor pulls, the county fair, school and community plays and football and basketball games. Cover-dish dinners before club and group meetings are popular. Churches in summer often have "dinner on the ground."

The two-day festival called "Good Ole Cannon County Days" is held in May, under the leadership of Bill Smith and the staff of the Bank of Commerce. Citizens exhibit anything old in the shop windows around the square. Many wear clothing of their ancestors. Some hitch mules to an old wagon or a horse to the refurbished buggy, surrey, or buckboard and ride in the parade. Old fashioned games like marbles and horse shoes are played in the courthouse yard. In the evenings, costumed pageants, skits, and a beauty contest are held.

View from Round Hill of Woodbury in 1938. *Courtesy of Walter McCrary and Charlie Harrell.*

In 1937 the Lions Club leased ten acres of land on the southeastern border of town to be used as a recreational area. In 1947 the county bought it. Now known as Lions Park, it has a recreation building, a swimming pool, playgrounds and bleachers. Walking horse shows, tractor pulls, football and baseball games, and the county fair are held there. The Lions Club, supported by other agencies in the county, has long sponsored a drive to get a portion of the west spur of Short Mountain declared a park or natural conservation area.

In the 1950s Sterling Brown and his sister Daisy gave land for a city park southeast of town on the Jim Cummings Highway. A beautiful, rolling landscape with tennis courts, a picnic shelter, and ancient trees, it is known as Brown-Spurlock Park.

In the 1960s Dr. and Mrs. J. F. Adams gave a lot on College Street for a county library. County citizens gave money for the building. Named the Dr. and Mrs. J. F. Adams Memorial Library, it opened in April of 1966. It has more than 15,000 volumes.

Aunt Puss Wiley, last surviving former slave, at her home in Woodbury in 1944. *Courtesy of Richard Shacklett.*

Doctors in Woodbury in the 1920s and 1930s were J. F. Adams, T. J. Bratten, B. P. Lester, Mayne B. McCrary, and T. M. Smoot. In the early 1930s, Dr. Adams built the Good Samaritan Hospital with Henry Hoover, local architect. Present doctors are William A. Bryant, his sons Rodney and Gary, Fred Myers, Russell Myers (no kin), Leon Reuhland, and Herbert Wolf.

Lawyers in Woodbury in the 1930s were Sterling Brown, Hoyt Bryson, Walter McCrary, James H. Cummings, Fred Elledge and Walter Hancock. Today, they are Bill Bryson, Hoyt Bryson, Marshall Duggin, Walter McCrary, Gerald Melton, John Melton, Richard Northcutt, and Larry Richards.

Some Famous Folks

Cannon County has a way of holding on to people. Like Aunt Jane Summers, who lived for 90 years at the head of Stone's River and went to Texas where she expected to glory in limitless horizons. She took a long look and started "thinking about them winesap apples coming rolling down the hill toward the house" and came back home, where her horizon was limited to little more than 300 yards. Anytime she got tired of that, she said, she could walk a mile up Dug Hollow to the "Bar'ns" and see all the way to the Cumberland Mountains.

But some people do get away. Some Rutherford Countians have said that when a Cannon Countian got two hundred dollars together, he moved to Murfreesboro. And Murfreesboro has prospered.

Two families, the Hugh L. Prestons and the W. C. Houstons, have had impact on national affairs. Thomas R. Preston became president of the American Bankers' Association. Frank K. Houston became president of the Chemical National Bank of New York. Close associates at home, the two families clashed on the national scene, when John W. Preston, President Coolidge's special counsel, helped retrieve the Elk Hills oil lands leased to private companies by Secretary of the Interior Albert B. Fall, who had married W. C. Houston's aunt at the Benjamin Fugitt home on Doolittle Road.

Cannon County Courthouse, built in 1935-1936.

J. F. Adams

Dr. J. F. Adams was born October 19, 1881, at Short Mountain. To pay expenses in medical school, he taught school (which was to no avail) and sold sewing machines in several states (which was). In 1907, he married Laura Elizabeth Hudson of McKinney, Texas. He finished medical school at Vanderbilt in 1911 and practiced at Short Mountain and Bradyville until 1924, except for a year in the army medical corps in 1918.

Dr. Adams was a forceful and energetic man who had much impact on the county. He had many interests, including farming, banking, real estate, and county government. He built the town's first ice factory and a building for the Armour Cheese Plant. A man of concentration, Dr. Adams would sometimes dash off to the hospital in the dead of winter without his coat, but never without his cigar.

Dr. and Mrs. Adams raised nine children and kept all of them busy during the summer months. Three of them became doctors well known outside the county: Ralph, Carl, and Hugh.

Beaver Dam, home of Congressman W. C. Houston, built around 1870.

One cannot speak of Dr. Adams without speaking of Mrs. Adams, who worked tirelessly raising her large family, chairing and meeting with charity fund drives, parent-teacher groups, and town and county committees—all the time cooking and serving meals for patients in the Good Samaritan Hospital. She could approach her limit, however. A story goes that she once said to Dr. Adams, "I'm going to leave you." "Good," said Dr. Adams, "I'll go with you."

Dr. Adams died in 1966, Mrs. Adams in 1974.

Walter H. Campbell

Dr. Walter H. Campbell, known locally as "Squint," lived his young years on a farm west of Woodbury. After graduating from State Teachers College at Murfreesboro (now MTSU), he taught schools in the county, joined the newly-formed Lions Club, took a master's degree in education at Duke and a degree in dentistry at Northwestern. He began practicing in Miami Beach.

In Florida, he remained active in the Lions Club. A man of magnetic personality, he was soon president, then district governor, international director, and president of Lions Club International (1965-1966). As president, he traveled over the world in the performance of his official duties, meeting with leaders and heads of state. He counted Albert Schweitzer a special friend.

The Dr. and Mrs. J. F. Adams Memorial Library on College Street in Woodbury.

Dr. Campbell always maintained close contact with Cannon County. When he died in 1979, his body was brought back at his request for burial at Riverside Cemetery. Austin Jennings, himself a recent director of Lions Club International, said, "He was a gentle man and stood tall among the giants of the earth."

Mr. Jim

James H. Cummings, known over Tennessee as Mr. Jim, was born on a farm near Woodbury on November 8, 1890. He was a life-long Democrat and a living legend, honored in his own time. After studying law at YMCA Night School and Cumberland University, he began practicing at Woodbury in 1922. In 1925, he married Hesta McBroom, who served as his home secretary until she died in the 1970s. He was elected to the Legislature in 1929 and served continuously in the house or the senate until 1972, except for four years (1949-1952) when he served as Tennessee secretary of state. He was speaker of the house for the 85th General Assembly. Always a champion of public education and rural Tennessee, he is credited with saving Middle Tennessee State Teachers College and Agricultural and Industrial State College from extinction during the Depression.

Mr. Jim Cummings and John Bragg study a piece of proposed legislation in the General Assembly. *Print courtesy of Richard Shacklett.*

He was honored in many ways. A wing of the legislative office building in Nashville, a MTSU building, and a state highway were named for him. On November 21, 1972, which the Woodbury Lions Club had named Jim Cummings Day, dignitaries and friends from all over the state came to visit him, including ex-Governor Gordon Browning. In August of 1979, Governor Alexander dropped in on him at his home. The 1979-1980 *Tennessee Blue Book* was dedicated to him. Representative John Bragg of Rutherford County, who spent his first 13 years in Cannon County, calls Mr. Jim his inspiration and political

godfather. His colleagues called him "the dean of the legislature."

A simple man, in his legislative office Mr. Jim customarily opened his own mail and read it to his secretary in his loud, clear speaker's voice, commenting on it statement by statement to the amusement of personnel in other offices who often stopped their work to listen to his sometimes blunt and caustic comments. "Now he knows that's a damn lie," he might say. In legislative halls, his sharp tongue stung many a governor.

Mr. Jim could have been produced only in the South. The last and best of an older order, he evoked the essence of a more gracious, gentler time—of friendly towns and family farms and hills and valleys and country roads in winter rains and summer sun.

He died November 1, 1979. He was buried on home ground, in the family graveyard on a hillside two miles east of Woodbury.

Uncle Dave Macon

He was first of all a showman, then a banjo picker, then a singer. But, all in all, he was a personality bigger than life—a square-built, jovial, boisterous, Rabelaisian story-telling, sermonizing, whiskey-drinking, conscience-stricken, God-fearing man.

He was Uncle Dave Macon to everybody who listened to him pick and whang his whirling banjo and sing, and sometimes dance in the light of kerosene lamps and unshaded electric light bulbs in country stores and schoolhouses and then on the stage of the "Grand Ole Opry" for thirty years. "People always liked him," his early sidekick fiddler Sid Harkreader said. "He made people laugh." That was his power. He made people feel good.

He was not strictly a Cannon Countian, if one's physical residence determines belonging. But his artistic and professional residence was Cannon. He sang a song he called "The Cannon County Hills" so often that people everywhere within reach of a radio on Saturday nights thought he lived there. He did not. He lived at Kittrell, in Rutherford County, but he claimed Readyville, on the Rutherford-Cannon line. A memorial to him stands on a hilltop in a roadside park two miles east of Woodbury.

Uncle Dave Macon. *Courtesy of Charles K. Wolfe.*

"Mr. Jim" Cummings told this story: He was traveling through Arizona and stopped at a gas station in the desert. "I see you're from Tennessee," said the attendant. "Where from?" "Oh, it's a little hill county you never heard of, called Cannon," said Mr. Jim. "Oh, yes," said the attendant, "that's Uncle Dave Macon's county. I listen to him every Saturday night."

Uncle Dave fell naturally into vaudeville style. He would play a while and lay his banjo against the wall and start fanning himself with his hat. Then the audience knew he was going to tell a story or two. The stories were earthy, sometimes bawdy and always had a cracker at the end—the audience would roar. In 1940 Uncle Dave, Roy Acuff and His Boys, Little Rachel, and George D. Hay went to Hollywood to make the picture called *The Grand Ole Opry.* Uncle Dave was 70 years old.

His friend Beecher Brown said of him years later: "For 66 years he carried three banjos tuned to three different keys and sang songs about the broke, the hungry, the happy, the drunken, and lovers with tender humor that never judges, but only understands. He brought cheer to sick rooms, taught children to respect their parents and parents to love their children."

Uncle Dave died on March 22,1952. He had given his last performance on March 1. One country music historian said, "More than anyone else, Uncle Dave took the nineteenth-century folk music and turned it into twentieth-century country music."

Curiously, one of Uncle Dave's favorite songs apparently never got recorded, "The Cannon County Hills," a part of which goes:

> In the Cannon County mountains, they have bright and glowing fountains,
> On every hill they have a still.
> But you just remember one hundred days from next November,
> There'll be moonshine in the Cannon County hills.
> O, those hills, those beautiful hills,
> There'll be moonshine in the Cannon County hills.

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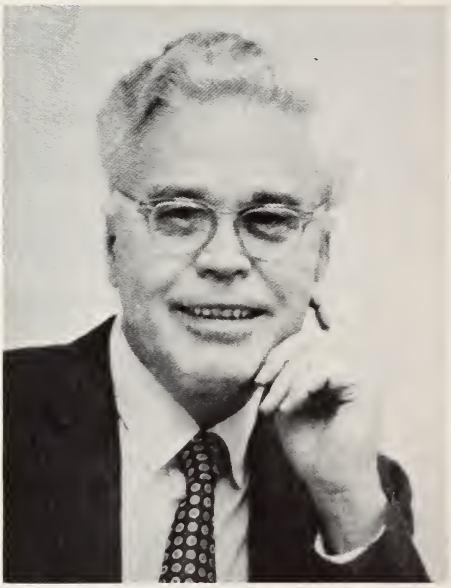

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